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CONTENTS

The Intellectual Foundations of the Renaissance Arun Kumar Das Gupta	... 1
Pre-War Feminism in Lawrence's <i>The Rainbow</i> Shanta Mahalanabis	... 30
T. S. Eliot as a Poetic-Critic K. N. Phukan	... 42
Eugene O'Neill and the Concept of "Psychic Fate" Krishna Sen	... 55
Hemingway's Changing World-View in <i>For Whom The Bell Tolls</i> Sanjukta Das Gupta	... 67
'Pure Perception' (Pater) and 'Immediate Experience' (F. H. Bradley) : A Note Soumyajit Samanta	... 78
The Debate on Learning in <i>Paradise Regained</i> Amlan Das Gupta	... 86

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This number has been edited by
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THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RENAISSANCE

ARUN KUMAR DASGUPTA

(Author's note : I am grateful to the editor of this Journal for publishing this article, which presents, in a condensed form, the contents of three lectures given in 1973 at the invitation of the Amal Bhattacharji Memorial Centre for European Studies in Calcutta. I have tried to preserve most of the first and second lectures, but have had to omit a great deal of the third. In spite of its ambitious title, Section VI of the present article is somewhat restricted in scope. It treats only some of the pertinent ideas of Nicholas Cusanus. If I had to include the three other major thinkers discussed in the third and longest lecture in April, 1973, I would have had to re-write this article. Published at last, this course of lectures given more than thirteen years ago would have gained, if its contents were thoroughly revised and also expanded. Unfortunately, this has not been possible. I have been able to add only a few notes and revise a few others. The lectures, therefore, appear in their present form with a grave omission. However, though familiar, the ideas discussed are by no means obsolete. They have, I believe, a timeless relevance. My attempt to put them together is prompted by deep respect for values I shared with my teacher to whose memory this is dedicated.)

"Let us put in order the heaven that intellectually lies within us (*che intellettualmente è dentro di noi*)".

Giordano Bruno, *Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante*, Opere ital. 439 (Quoted by E. Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, tr. M. Domandi, p. 122).

THESE lectures, delivered in March-April, 1973, were planned as a tribute to the memory of my teacher, the late Professor Amal Bhattacharji of Presidency College, Calcutta. The title calls for a word of explanation at the outset. It may be asked why I have chosen the "intellect" as holding the key to the meaning of the Renaissance. I have not used the word "intellectual" primarily to suggest that thirst for unlimited knowledge, which is popularly associated with the Renaissance, though it will be seen to have some relation to "the basic Faustian attitude" of the period.¹ The term

is used here as it was used by the Platonists in the context of the speculative cosmology of the Renaissance. It assumes some knowledge of the basic distinction made between the two segments of the universe, the intelligible and the sensible, in order to accentuate that aspiration for the higher life of the mind or intellect which characterizes humanist thought and explains much of the art of the period. Like the word "intellect", "intelligence" is also used in the Platonic sense³ in relation to the hierarchy of the incorporeal, though I have not ignored another meaning of this word in judging the quality of Renaissance *intelligence* as revealed uniquely in its power of bringing together the widest possible diversity of opinions, experiences, ideas, etc.⁴ In all its varied senses, however, the term is a pointer to the concept which becomes the foundation of the new image of man in his freedom from a being that is given, capable of entering into all forms of being, thereby creating his own nature, in consequence of which life that is *human* comes to be thought of as a force rivalling that of cosmic potencies.

This concept of man may be explained with the help of the myth of Prometheus as the Man-making artist as treated in one of the major sources of contemporary mythography, Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum*.⁵ Here the Adam motif merges with the Prometheus motif. The medieval thinkers seized upon the negative aspect of the myth, interpreting it as only a pagan travesty of the Biblical story of creation. The true maker, they affirmed, is one, not two, i.e., God, not man. In Boccaccio, by contrast, there are *two* creations, not one. The first calls into being the mere existence of man, his physical reality. The second confers upon that existence an intellectual content. Thus is created the specific form of man, i.e., of *homo* as *humanus*.

We have here a basic distinction between the physical or natural man, man as he issues from the hand of Nature and the *intellectual*⁶ man, man as he is transformed by himself. The true significance of the creation of man lies in man's being not just a creature but also a *creator* in the likeness of God, the 'created God', in fact, a 'deus occasionatus'. This power of self-renewal is the inner meaning of 'renaissance'. The meaning is deepened further when related to the renaissance of nature, its redemption being brought about by man.⁶

Consider what would happen, if human nature were removed from the created universe. There would be no such thing as *value*, a sense of the higher and the lower, of greater and lesser perfection. "God strikes the coins, but the human mind determines their values."⁷

When we see the contrast in the attitude towards Nature between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages, we also grasp the meaning of the conquest of space in Renaissance art through the application of the basically mathematical concepts of perspective and proportion. Man's descent into the sphere of the sensible is no longer an analogue of his fall. By so descending into the sensible, the intellect of man confers a value thereon i.e., on what merely exists. The kind of transformation it brings about is that of mere being into a vivid and palpitating life, answering in harmony to the rhythm of man's own life, the rhythm of ascent from the lower to the higher, from nature or matter to spirit or intelligence. Just as nature is raised up to God through the mediation of man as maker, so, during the Renaissance, human culture is dedicated to the task of visibly confirming or vindicating the freedom of the human spirit. "Now", as Cassirer puts it, "human culture has found its true theodicy".⁸ Renascent man joins renascent nature in a unified ascent to God, their Maker.

The turning of the chaos that unredeemed nature was into the clarity and depth of nature redeemed, as the transparent garment⁹ through which the spirit shines in the cosmos of Renaissance art, is a visible proof, if any proof were needed, of the fundamental relation of Art and Intellect in this age. Through the mediation of art there is a perpetual cycle of "an ascent of the sensible to the intellect and a descent of the intellect to the sensible".¹⁰ This centrally important aspiration towards higher things, the unremitting effort to grasp and render *visible* what is *intelligible*, is by nature indefinable and immeasurable. Here, in the realm of the authentic fulfilment of the Humanist dream of perfection, calculation fails. This intellectual freedom, essentially creative, probably sprang from an indefinable, mystic impulse common to an extraordinary number of men of genius, many of them conforming to the Renaissance ideal of *l'uomo universale*, men we admire for the range and quality of their mind.

The Renaissance in history would seem to bear some resemblance to that brief spell of intense life which all of us have known sometime in our individual lives : one of those "moments" that bring a simultaneous awareness of the fullness of the life of the senses and that of the spirit, which give a unique, though characteristically brief and concentrated, meaning to our existence, but remain unrelated to the relatively less illuminated zone of the past and the relatively more "enlightened" zone of the period that follows. The Renaissance, accordingly, may be regarded as a period of transition ; an interim of effective freedom of the intellect between the scholastic authoritarianism of the Middle Ages and the rationalistic authoritarianism of the Age of Enlightenment. It is one of the ironies of the intellectual history of Europe that experimental science, itself the child of a revolt against reason as identified with the tyranny of scholastic logic, fathered a new spirit of authoritarianism and formalism.¹¹

A recognition of the intellectual independence of the Renaissance as a transitional period may save us from the danger of either overstating the importance of "renascence" or of belittling it. We may also hope in this way to restore the term to its deeper meaning, one akin to the other term "Reformation", the common spiritual urge being an expectation of salvation, of redemption, the kernel of a notion of renewal of life,¹² outer and inner, of nature and spirit. This is reflected in the affinities of a whole range of terms like *renascor*, *renovare*, *reformare*, etc.¹³ They all point to a common impulsive faith in the possibility of a renewal of form, a transformation.

We must view with caution the impulse to associate the term "Renaissance" with what is popularly regarded as the hall-mark of the modern age, its "anti-authoritarian" spirit.¹⁴ As for the pagan élan, on the other hand, it seems at this distance that it was a mask worn for distinction : exclusive attention to it may be frustrating, because, however much we may be tempted to admire the mask, the mask serves as much to hide, as reveal, the face, the physiognomy of the Renaissance.

The over-inflated notion of "liberty" is a typical delusion of modern culture, suitably embellished with political overtones. It

should warn us about the need of distinguishing Renaissance humanism from later self-styled brands of "Humanism".¹⁵ Our understanding of Renaissance humanism is cramped by a tendency to regard it as a forerunner or counterpart of later similarly named movements. With all our "liberty", however, we lack the greatest freedom of all, "that centrally placed liberty", as it has been called, "of man as man".¹⁶ To be "homo" is one thing; to be "humanus" is another. Our concept of liberty is the liberty of the alienated individual: unrelated, unlocated, absolute and totalitarian. But the Renaissance concept is that of man as man. *Libertas* is therefore, inseparable from *humanitas*. The primary purpose is to distinguish *man* as sharply as possible from the rest of nature, i.e., sub-human creation, animal and vegetable, on the one hand, and the *human* from the *divine or supernatural* on the other.¹⁷ A brief survey relating to the uses of the term "Renaissance" may be helpful before we continue with this discussion of the two-fold distinction of man.

II

The term "Renaissance", at one time regarded as highly suitable for describing the intellectual, cultural and spiritual ferment or upsurge that began somewhat fortuitously with the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the consequent flight of Greek scholars to Italy and the rediscovery of classical manuscripts, has now raised doubts in the minds of many historians about its utility. At least they feel that it has a much wider span in human history. In fact they suggest not one, but several *Renascences*.¹⁸ Croce in "The Positivity of History" refers to these birth-pangs of *renaissance* in the womb of time as the periodic upsurge of an impulse to oppose and escape from an old order to a new form of life. "In that act which is in labour to produce a new form of life the adversary who opposed us is in the wrong, the state from which we wish to escape is unhappy: the new to which we are tending becomes symbolized as a dreamed-of felicity to be attained, as a past condition to restore." In other words, at certain moments the dream of the future coincides with the dream of the past, necessarily a golden past. Within the historical limits of the period known as the Renaissance, the mode of transformation of the past is reflected in

the attitude of the humanists towards classical antiquity as contrasted with that towards the Middle Ages in this way : the former was regarded as luminous, the latter dark.

Some, like Arnold Hauser,¹⁹ have legitimate doubts about the conventional distinction between the Medieval and the Modern. They admit, accordingly, the notion of an indeterminate fluidity in the use of the term. As Huizinga²⁰ says, the Renaissance is either pushed back towards the Middle Ages, or pushed forward to the period of the Enlightenment : the real turning point is, possibly, the introduction of the idea of progress and industrialization. Identifying the beginning of the Renaissance, therefore, is a matter that depends on the particular feature or symptom that a particular historian chooses to isolate.²¹ An obvious choice, for example, would be naturalism : the interest in the individual object, the search for natural law and the ideal of fidelity to life in art. This can be shown as having originated in the Gothic period and Arnold Hauser has emphasized the influence of nominalism.²²

C. S. Lewis understandably expresses his irritation with the habit of employing the term rather vaguely.²³ The grounds of his rejection of the term are, however, questionable, especially when he says that, unlike other labels like "Antiquity" and "Middle Ages", it is a term without historical perspective, having been used by the people of the period itself. A strange objection like this should make us think whether the term has indeed outlived its utility.

Douglas Bush would give the term a very long life. He takes the Renaissance as that long process of re-education of Europe after "the decayed Roman empire was overrun by virile and uncivilized barbarians" : the re-education of Christians as well as the education of the barbarians by Christians through classics. The beginning, therefore, he concludes, can be pushed back at least a thousand years and the end is not yet in sight, since the "modern" world is dominated by two impulses which have their origin in the Renaissance : rationalism and empiricism.²⁴

Naturalism in art and literature, sceptical rationalism and empiricism in science and philosophy : these, undoubtedly, are the more

immediately recognizable, the more spectacular ideas that we believe we have inherited from the Renaissance. But these may not take us very far towards an understanding of the Renaissance concept of freedom. It is even possible that we are cut off from the authentic source of its power. The significance of the "Renaissance" is inseparable from that of "humanitas". The pagan and the Christian elements of the thought of the Renaissance are related in a manner that suggests a vigorous alliance rather than hostility. Christianity, in a sense, instead of weakening the classical spirit, actually strengthened it. The Renaissance discovered a continuity of life which overcame the temporal barrier between the past and the present, just as it overcame the moral barrier between nature and spirit familiar in the Middle Ages. This continuity is, of course, twofold: of survival as well as of revival.

III

The meaning of the term *humanitas*⁵ is a compound of two separate sets of antitheses: (1) classical: man vs. animal / barbarian; (2) medieval: man vs. God.

DIVINITAS

FERITAS

HUMANITAS

Let us place the two terms *divinitas* and *feritas* at two extremes, with *humanitas* as the middle term to form a pair of oppositions so juxtaposed as to generate a perennial tension between two opposed movements stemming from the common base or centre, which is humanity: a tension between an upward movement and a downward movement, between ascent and descent, between aspiration or sublimation and corruption or degradation. This leaves an equal and free choice for man centrally placed between two possible changes of form or metamorphoses: between a continuity of ascent, apparently unlimited, towards a higher form of life, and a continuity of descent towards a lower form of life or, rather, mere existence.

The Renaissance man used both these sets of antitheses as the two wings, if I may say so, on which to fly in quest of

self-discovery, of his true *humanitas*, so as to avoid the fate of Icarus. The fall of Icarus was one of the favourite myths used by Renaissance authors and artists. Two examples must suffice : from Marlowe and from Pieter Breughel.

The opening chorus of *Dr. Faustus* has the following passage :

So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism graz'd,
That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology ;
Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
And melting heavens conspir'd his overthrow ...

(lines 15-22)

Notice the occurrence of "divinity" in the first of the lines quoted (line 15) and "heavens" in the last (line 22) with "heavenly matters" in the middle (line 19) : the passage describes in mythical terms how a man who might have continued to profit in divinity is overthrown by the heavens because of his incomplete awareness of his humanity. The Renaissance man was aware of the danger of flying on the waxen wings of self-conceit. He chose, instead, to fly with the wings of mutually invigorating antitheses securely fastened to the cosmos of his *humanitas*.

The second example I have chosen is the picture "The Fall of Icarus" by Breughel : a striking illustration of the imaginative power latent in the traditional myth as seen in its masterly treatment by the great painter. The key to the painter's interpretation³⁶ lies in the broad, straight back of average humanity in the figure of the peasant in foreground, his legs firmly planted on the soil, his gaze unaverted from his humble but rewarding task, his hands engaged in precise and exacting labour, as obedient as the horse tied to his plough, his indifference to the inevitable fate of human aspiration as shadowed forth in the flying figure of Icarus above (at top left) and in the legs of the unfortunate aviator almost comically disappearing in the waves below (at bottom right), swallowed up by the inexorable logic of the law of nature, as it were, reflected alike in the imperturbable folds of his humble peasant's garment and the level

furrows of the ground being tilled. The whole scene is framed in a kind of cosmic theatre, earth, sea, sky, human occupations and habitations, urban and rural, forming an appropriate setting for the theme : the quiet, dignified, unexalted reward of solid industry is implied in this attitude of fidelity to nature, just as punishment, at once terrible and ludicrous, is reserved for human conceit, if it dares transcend the limits of Nature.

A consideration of Breughel's picture may suggest what the Renaissance made of the medieval antithesis in constructing its notion of *humanitas*. It takes the shape of a becoming humility based on an understanding of the limitations of man as man : above all, of his frailty and fallibility, of the complexities, in fact, at once tragic and comic, of human nature, as distinct from the simplicity and purity of divine nature. This gives rise to an essentially Christian vision of human tragedy which is deepened by associating man's fallibility with his frailty. The tragic emphasis, in this view, is on guilt and expiation rather than on error and the price that has to be paid for one's folly. It is based on the implicit recognition of the complexity of human sin and may provide an appropriate framework for judging the tragic quality of a play like *Macbeth* and understanding, instead of half-regretting, Shakespeare's choice of *mochtheria* rather than *hamartia* in shaping the tragic characters in that play. Paradoxically, this apparently un-Aristotelian view of tragedy serves, indirectly, to bring the total experience very close to the Aristotelian demand for universalization of individual tragedy. By implication, the evil is not just located in the individual. This vision of evil is more, not *less* tragic, because simultaneously it evokes the larger, more inescapable fear that *this* evil is a part of the scheme of things, that it is *objective*.

This deeper understanding of man's frailty calls for a meek acceptance of his limitations : an attitude that characterizes the face of man when it is turned towards God. When, however, Janus-like, he turns about to face the rest of creation, man feels equally the need to overcome these limitations so as to hold his position in the centre. This is what the Renaissance assimilated from the classical antithesis between *humanitas* and *feritas* and the corresponding mood is that of human pride justified by man's superiority to beast or

barbarian. In the exposition of the medieval antithesis I had used, to bring out its inner content, the classical myth of the fall of that unfortunate aviator, Icarus. To illustrate the meaning of the substance or content of the classical antithesis for bringing out the meaning of "renaissance", I shall now cite the brief speech of a modern aviator, also fictional: the cryptic speech of Guillaumet in Antoine de Saint-Exupery's novel entitled (in English) "Wind, Sand and Stars". The man had been lost in the Andes, almost given up for dead. Even the search for him had been virtually abandoned. When, therefore, he is found, and found alive, he is almost like a man re-born. The speech I quote is his first *intelligible* statement—it was as if he had unlearned speech and learnt to speak it again—"I swear that what I went through, no animal would have gone through". "A speech", the author of the novel remarks, "admirable in its human pride". The true meaning of "renaissance" is here, too.

A cognate *human* pride comes out in the touching anecdote narrated by Panofsky²⁷ to whose exposition of *humanitas* I remain indebted. Nine days before his death Immanuel Kant was visited by his physician. "Old, ill and nearly blind, he rose from his chair, and stood trembling with weakness and muttering unintelligible words. Finally, his faithful companion realized that he would not sit again until the visitor had taken a seat. This he did, and then Kant permitted himself to be helped to his chair and after having regained some of his strength, said, 'The sense of humanity has not yet left me—'". This was said by the great philosopher when deprived of nearly all other organic senses. Man *alone* can, we thus see, create and control his *sense* of humanity. That is how man is re-born, we might say, even while he is oppressed by his mortality. The whole process is vividly described: the ascent from anguished mutterings to intelligible speech displaying a concern exclusively *human*.

Similarly, we may remember, Lear, surrounded by *feritas* in nature, says to the Fool, as he stands on the heath before a hovel, his very reason about to give way, even as his old reverend head is exposed to the wild rage of the storm, to all that filial ingratitude and the ingrate heavens can inflict: "In, boy, go first. You houseless

poverty – ". His thought breaks off here (*Lear* III. iv. 26) and is resumed at line 28 : "Poor naked wretches...such as these !" (28-32). There is a sign of redemption in the thought that follows : "O, I have ta'en / Too little care of this." This discovery, to which that touching gesture towards the Fool : "In, boy, go first" has been an apt prelude, is part of Lear's education. He, too, is re-born²⁸.

All these are examples of human pride rooted in human wisdom and heroic fortitude : in the ability, as Panofsky puts it, "to submit to *self-approved* and *self-imposed* laws", which quite sets him apart from, if not above, the conditions of his mortality.

Let me quote, finally, another remark which occurs later in the narrative of Guillaumet's heroic endurance in Saint-Exupéry's novel : "What saves a *man* is to take a step, another step."²⁹ That, to my mind, admirably sums up the idea of human progress and the message of human salvation, of *rinascita*.

IV

In the foregoing exposition of *humanitas* the central reference was to human nature and its dual orientation. Our understanding of Renaissance humanism would, nevertheless, remain incomplete if we fail to grasp the relevance of the humanist's attitude to *nature* as well as to *culture*³⁰. Tradition was, to the humanist, something real and objective, i. e., not something dead and past, but with a life or spirit capable of ensuring a continuity of culture, when assimilated. The idea of development or growth³¹ reveals in fact nature and culture as allied and complementary processes, when life is interpreted in the humanist spirit. Tradition embraces both in this meaningful relationship so that it becomes not only something to be studied, but also to be reinstated. Turning to nature, man found much that was instructive. But what he found lacking in nature was human records as a supplementary source of knowledge and self-cultivation. The aim of the humanists was, thus, not only to reduce the chaos of nature, nature in the raw, so to speak, to an order founded upon observation as well as reflection, but also to reduce the chaos of human records, the fortuitously ruined and re-discovered remnants of classical antiquity. For achieving the second ordering

of human experience, the cosmos of culture that lends meaning and a human countenance, as it were, to the cosmos of nature the approved methods were imitation and assimilation. In fact the two processes, imitation and assimilation were, as we shall see, one and the same.

The humanist, it will now be obvious, had to be a historian : archaeologist as well as antiquarian. The scientist-humanist, likewise, was his close ally. Interest in nature goes hand in hand with interest in culture and both have their origin in a quest for order or *cosmos*, a basic humanist impulse. The encyclopaedic ideal of the Renaissance is also revealed as not only the cause of collaboration between artist and scientist, but more significantly, and spectacularly, manifested in the coincidence of both in the same person not seldom. The Renaissance man, conceived according to this ideal of *l'uomo universale*, wanted to realize fully his own potentiality, as also that of his species. This is man's unique privilege as man, not as individual. The true meeting-point of the individual and the universal is in man. In the realm of nature he alone is capable of the highest development of his individuality as well as of his species.

One conspicuous outcome of the new culture so conceived was the individual's desire for fame²² ; for self-perpetuation in a monumental style, for commemoration of antiquity as well as of self, especially when the two could be combined in a learned and urbane manner. The individual of the Renaissance and the cosmos of revived antiquity strive to merge in one another and often graciously blend to give a unique flavour. The concept of virtue can no longer be restricted either to the exclusively moral or the Christian level. It is enlarged and embellished to express totally the individual's heroic resolve to leave an indelible mark on his time.

The Other Nature

Nature and culture were twin sources of humanist *paideia*, though the world of culture remained the domain uniquely human in the scope it offered for the demonstration of man's dignity and freedom. The freedom is realized when the human mind remains distinct and unattached in the exercise of the power, specifically

human, of observing, even of entering into or seizing the forms of the objective world that surrounds him. The process of assimilation, therefore, implies this freedom of movement unrestricted by any ties that might bind the knower to the object of his knowledge. This dynamism, the freedom to 'rove', constitutes the specifically *human* consciousness of the subject that refuses to be immersed in the object, because it is so jealous of its freedom to remain apart. The process of assimilation implies this dual power of identification and of preserving the identity of the ego or subject; a uniquely human synthesis of sameness and difference. Humanist culture is assimilative precisely in this sense. The doctrine of imitation, intimately associated with the style *all' antica* was developed during the Renaissance with an emphasis upon the creation of "another nature and other fortunes" as if the poet were "another god". Spingarn, referring to Scaliger in whom "this principle is carried one stage further" than in Vida, says, "Virgil especially has created another nature of such beauty and perfection that the poet need not concern himself with the realities of life, but can go to the second nature created by Virgil for the subject matter of imitation".³³

The relationship between nature and "the other nature" of man's making is well brought out by Petrarch in a passage in his *Familiar Letters*.³⁴ He begins by clearly distinguishing between the terms "similar" and "identical". *Similarity* he defines as not being of the kind that obtains between a portrait and a sitter (the praise earned being proportionate to the *likeness*), but rather of the kind that obtains between a father and a son.

The original formula, which is Quintilian's found by Seneca³⁵, describes the process with the traditional comparison of a bee *transforming* nectar into honey, or less picturesquely, but no less accurately, of the body assimilating nourishment. Seneca added the happy comparison of a family likeness, which Petrarch elaborated to bring out the *general* likeness and the *individual* differences between a work of imitation and its source or original (norm) :

"Here" (i.e., in this affinity, as between a son and a father), "though there may often be a great difference between their individual features, a certain *shadow* as our painters call it, *air* (*umbra* quedam et quem pictores nostri *aerem* vocant), perceptible above

all in the face and eyes, produces that similarity that reminds us of the father as soon as we see the son, even though, if the matter were put to *measurement*, all parts would be found different : some hidden quality has this power."

Petrarch, therefore, perceives the source of this similarity as a hidden power, a *quality* to be felt rather than seen :

"So we, too, should take care that when one thing is like, many should be unlike, and that what is like should be hidden so as to be grasped by the mind's silent enquiry as intelligible rather than describable. We should therefore make use of another man's inner quality and tone, but avoid his words. For the one kind of similarity is hidden, and the other protrudes ; the one creates poets, the other apes."

"Intelligible, rather than describable": how concisely this expresses the feeling produced by the ideality of the resemblance to life of the great portraits of Raphael, Titian, Holbein and others, and, again, of scenes of action and movement, of any representation, in fact, which makes us feel like saying, "How true to life !" The difference between this *ideal resemblance* or "counterfeiting" and the *actual*, i.e., merely outward, *likeness* sought after diligently by the inferior sort of portrait painter, is well brought out by Sidney when he says :

"... the skill of the artificer standeth in that *Idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself."¹⁰ For the Mannerists, as also for Sidney, beauty was not something derived or, rather, *diffused* from visible nature, but "something directly *infused* into the mind of man from the mind of God and existing independently of any sense-impressions."

In Augustine's theory of illumination¹¹, too, the emphasis is on origins, on *Idea*. Words, "in origin and in their best use"—only the latter recalls the former—"have an internal ... function". So used, they can be "audible and visible signs of a direct apprehension of invisible and inaudible truths". According to the Florentine Neo-Platonists, the philosopher, the visionary and the poet have such a direct and immediate apprehension of truth : of truth made visible, the *Idea* made flesh. This notion is also the basis of

Leonardo's argument in the *Paragone* that painting is superior to all other arts. On a less exalted, but no less characteristic, level, this is the kernel of the philosophy of concept as image. This philosophy of images underlies hieroglyphs, emblems, imprese, rebuses, reverses of medals epitomizing philosophic and moral themes, and similar other devices common in Renaissance art.⁸⁸

The general position might thus be stated: "the idea in the artist's *mind* is the source of all the beauty in the works he creates." A clear echo of this may be caught in the celebrated answer given by Raphael when asked where in all the world he had found a model of such beauty as his *Galatea*: "I had rather followed a certain idea in my mind."⁸⁹ Adumbration of the same Mannerist doctrine, according to which man's artistic activity is analogous to the process of God's creation, is found in this passage from Sidney's *Apology*:

"Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of Nature; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature: which in nothing he showeth so much as in Poetry."⁹⁰

VI

Philosophical Basis of the Renaissance Idea of Man's Freedom

We shall now attempt a very brief exposition of certain speculative trends in Renaissance thought. For lack of space we can refer here only to Nicholas Cusanus and have to omit thinkers like Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Carolus Bovilius some of whose relevant ideas were discussed briefly in the lectures given in 1973. In spite of this grave omission we hope that the contents of this section may bring out more clearly the inner meaning of the term "renaissance" touched upon earlier. The focus will be on the concept of the nature of man, his progress from substantiality to subjectivity, and his unique privilege of free will, i.e., the exercise of his freedom to create his own nature, which, not having been bestowed upon him as a gift, must be acquired by his own effort, by

art and virtue.⁴¹ These ideas, converging on the deeper significance of the traditional likeness between man and his Maker, and suggesting (e.g., in the Bovilian system) a mode of escape for man from the necessity of a fixed station in Nature, deepen the significance of the term "renaissance".

The doctrines of Nicholas of Cusa, as Cassirer says,⁴² constitute a focal point in which the most diverse rays of Renaissance thought are gathered. He is, besides, one of those universal scholars of the Renaissance: apart from being a theologian and mathematician, he was interested in astronomy and cosmography, problems of church history, political history, history of law and general intellectual history. He makes us realize that Italian culture has by no means its roots exclusively in the Italian soil. Cusanus was indebted to Italy but he paid back in abundant measure. The value of his contribution lies not in conclusions but in fertilizing tendencies: not in dogma but in initiating a new direction, a new orientation of "world-concept". His influence, accordingly, unconfined by the rigours of a school of thought, spreads in the shape of seminal impulses of thought and crosses territorial boundaries: it is, like a subtle emanation, invisible but very powerful.

His thought directs interest primarily to the lay world. This is a corollary to the Renaissance concept of versatility. The ideal scholar was necessarily non-academic and frequently anti-authoritarian, e.g., Leonardo, Petrarch or Montaigne, who, in particular, came to typify the lay philosopher. The deeper meaning of versatility is here. It is not unrelated to the ease and nonchalance, the *sprezzatura* of Castiglione's ideal courtier,⁴³ which produces the height of grace, avoiding artifice by cultivating the art of hiding knowledge. With skill, ease and readiness the Renaissance combined, of course, prudence. The well-known maxim of prudence and skill, *festina lente*, is represented by emblems like the dolphin and the anchor, the butterfly and the crab etc.⁴⁴

The basic affinity of the significance of the kind of orientation we find in Cusanus to the meaning of the Renaissance as a return to the sources is revealed in a classification of thinkers.⁴⁵

First, we have the primitives, the first great original minds, who recognised only one model: *experience* or nature. Then came the

imitators and commentators, abandoned Nature and slavishly dedicated themselves to soulless *discorsi*, fine-spun, over-ingenious conceptual distinctions, a veritable spider's web. In the *third* phase, only a return to nature, i.e., a return to natural human understanding can set things right. Shakespeare's use of the Fool, 'Nature's natural' as the antithesis of the doctrinaire, the 'wise man', "an ill-roasted egg all on one side", as Touchstone puts it (*AYLI*, III. ii. 39), would seem to have some relation to this larger significance of the new lay culture: the return to common humanity.⁴⁶ The motley, I suggest, is a vividly imagined creation of what may well turn out to be much more than a side-issue of Renaissance anthropology. We may note, in passing, the visual concreteness of the style of the Shakespearean Fool at his best, and the apparently inexhaustible store of empirical knowledge that he draws upon, the piercing home-truths that make him unassailable.

This mode of assault on received ideas is by no means an isolated development. The fine ambiguity of the humanist attitude towards antiquity, for example, is revealed, when we compare the works of Mantegna inspired by a genuine reverence for antiquity with a work like Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, usually called "Bacchanal."⁴⁷ The latter follows the precedent of Lucian's delicious irony, a subtle process of deromanticizing, bringing the gods down to the level of an embarrassingly common humanity. This kind of juxtaposition brings out in a delicately attenuated form the complementary, i.e., by no means conflicting, aspect of the humanist attitude not only to authority but also to the staple theme of the 'praise of man'. "The denunciation of man", in Chastel's words, "—the counterpart of metaphysical and generic praise—inspired a whole section of humanist activity."⁴⁸ In this complementary task of demystification the humanists discovered in irony an instrument much subtler than over-ridicule. Sebastian Brant's "Ship of Fools" and Erasmus's "Praise of Folly" are typical examples of a widespread tendency towards self-exposure in the familiar grab of Folly. The Fool in Shakespeare, a development in the same direction, uses irony as a rare instrument not merely for exploring the depths of humour itself, but, in the process, also for probing the depths of pain and anguish, uncovering, almost by a happy accident, how the intensity of the one blends imperceptibly with the

intensity of the other : in intensity, as in infinity, 'opposites are equal. The most notable achievement in this direction is the poetry of the Fool's wit in *King Lear*, rich alike in fantasy and poignancy, which continually shows how anguish that is almost irremediable can find relief only in a grotesque externalization of itself.

The Fool emerges as the mediator and maker in Shakespeare's comic universe. It is tempting to suggest that there is something of the make-up of the motley in the concept of the Bovilian man and the motley, in his turn, may be regarded as the Bovilian man in reverse. The freedom of man in turning his intellect in any direction is the meeting point of the thoughts of Cusanus, Pico and Bovilius. The comic hero of Shakespeare, if we can so describe the Fool, can place himself at any stage : "he's as good at anything"⁴⁰ He is at once the man of appetite, the sensual man, and the sage-man. Falstaff may indeed be regarded as Shakespeare's comic vision of *Homo Sapiens*. The Fool, like the Bovilian man, is minimum in substance but maximum in meaning : in him the comic cosmos is fulfilled. Unlike the other characters in a play, he has no fixed station. He is not bound by necessity, certainly not by the necessity of playing a fixed rôle and yet he is everywhere by the sheer mobility of his wit. He permeates the play and the play finds its meaning in him.

This new ideal of lay knowledge that we find in Cusanus is a development parallel to that of lay piety, a doctrine he imbibed from the Brothers of Common Life. The anti-clerical idea of priests being taught by mystical laymen originated in Rhineland in the tradition of the Frauenmystik 'de-eroticized and intellectualized'.⁴⁰

In *Idiota* the essential trait of wisdom is established : it is not confined to any institution and it is independent of any scholarly appurtenances. It can be found everywhere,⁴¹ because the basic power of a human being is that of measuring, weighing and counting. It is the foundation of all intellectual activity and man's uniqueness lies in the power of conferring value on things. Instead of the traditional regenerative vision, the one associated with a return to the foundations of reason. The issue here is : how to stimulate the basic power of the human mind, and offer ample scope for its free and fruitful operation.

The metaphysical concept of value, as formulated by Cusanus, is linked with the concept of proportion lauded as "the mother of knowledge and the mother and queen of art."⁵² Its significance is visible in the radiance of redeemed Nature in Renaissance art. Symbolically, it is the link between the higher sphere of being, i.e., Heaven or the Sphere of the Intelligible and the lower, i.e., the Realm of Nature. The link is forged by the value-conferring act of the human intellect.

We may pause here to reflect on the difference in philosophical method and aesthetic effect that may be associated with the later formulation of *concettismo* attributed to Giordano Bruno.⁵³ Bruno's substitution of *heroic love* for the Petrarchan *amore*, a love felt and extended towards the universe, led to a coincidence of the theodicy of *concettismo* with the idea of the universe as an infinite network of analogies. Bruno and the theorists of the conceit used the Platonic principle of universal analogy as the basis of a poetic. Since the universe is a unity, a whole composed of the most bewildering multiformity, the most heterogeneous metaphors, the most violent yoking together of dissimilars could be justified as the expression of the underlying similarity of things. The characteristic difference between the art of the Early and High Renaissance on the one hand and Mannerist art on the other can be measured in terms of the difference in aesthetic value of the respective modes of apprehending the unity of the universe.

In his view of the relationship between God and man, Cusanus achieves a unique reconciliation of the incomprehensible infinity of the former and the finite comprehension of the latter. His theory of enlightened ignorance is an extension of the *theologia negativa*.⁵⁴ In a strikingly novel manner, however, it replaces the negative mood of defeat and despondency with a bold confidence, paradoxically affirmed by the undeniable ignorance of the limited intellect of man, in the mind of man as a valid medium of knowledge. The notion of reconciliation of contraries, of *coincidentia oppositorum*, is derived from Eckhart, and used to a novel effect by Cusanus's genius for synthesis. The three books of *Docta ignorantia*, as indicated in the plan set out in Bk. I, ch. ii, deal with a MAXIMUM: (i) with *maximum absolutum*, i.e., God, (ii) with *maximum*

contractum or the sum of limited things, i.e., the universe and (iii) with man in the universe as the mediator in whom the universe as a whole is fulfilled : it is man who links the world with its creator. Eckhart had been charged with having taught that man is God, because he had explained that God the Father's act of expressing His own Being in knowing another (i.e., the Son) as Logos was a kind of 'begetting'. He had expounded the *human* nature of the Incarnate word in these terms. In Christ there is an identity of *maximum absolutum* and *maximum contractum*. God's incarnation in Christ is the event which constitutes the *centre* of human history as interpreted by Christian theology. This *idea* of Christ provides the basis for the unique transformation of man's intellectual power.⁵⁵ Earlier, we had described how the human intellect had descended to the sensible to redeem Nature from the bondage of sin. Now, according to this new vision, God or Pure Intellect descends, too, finds His own fulfilment.

Cusanus' idea of man and his dignity is characteristically expressed by his use of the analogy of the *centre of a circle* to define man as mediator and maker giving form and meaning to the universe. For his idea of God, he uses the analogy of *an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere*.⁵⁶ All objects in space are equidistant from God. The distance between each of them or all of them together and God is equal, being equally immeasurable. This is the equality conferred by infinity on things that are finite. They are all equal as objects of knowledge. In infinity, again, nowhere is everywhere. God, though nowhere visible in His Unity of Being, is, nevertheless, *in* everything. The centre, in this sense, is everywhere. Every object becomes, symbolically, an image of God. Division itself becomes the condition for union. An image, so interpreted, becomes 'a surmised shape', an expression of this yearning for union with the indivisible and invisible. This urge to make the invisible or the intelligible visible, as we have seen, constitutes the theodicy of art.

God, the absolute maximum, is beyond our comprehension in so far as the intellect in conscious of His difference, of its own complete 'otherness'. Cusanus accepts as his starting point the traditional notion of the limitation of the human intellect incapable, by its very

nature, of grasping the infinite. Yet he achieves a remarkable feat when he contends that, in its 'knowledge of its non-knowledge', the human intellect at least grasps itself in its sharp opposition to the divine or the infinite.⁵⁷ This is the kind of fulfilment, paradoxical as it may appear, that the Individual could find, when confronting the universal. In his *De visione Dei*,⁵⁸ recalling the self-portrait of Rogier van der Weyden and its peculiar property, Cusanus shows how each individual may stand face to face with God, since the same face, remaining stationary, looks directly at the viewer, no matter where he stands, moving in whatever direction, east or west.⁵⁹ Such is the relation in which motion and stillness are uniquely reconciled, between God and the individual being. The total unity of vision—the vision of the intellect⁶⁰ includes each of the individual views. It is, moreover, a synthetic rather than an aggregative whole. The truth of the relationship between the finite and the infinite lies in a kind of reciprocity, rather than hostility or mere opposition, in this mutual dependence of the subject, the knower (or viewer), and the object of knowledge. Every *view* of God is so determined by this kind of interpenetration of subject and object.

The Ego finds itself out by turning to the world, by making a continuous effort to draw the world into oneself. Bovilius, in fact, was to take this idea a step further in his own distinctive development of the concept of man's intellectual power or his 'wisdom' in *De Sapiente*.⁶¹ Like Pico, he emphasizes the idea that man creates his own nature, having had none bestowed upon him and, having, thus, no fixed station, so to speak, *turns* in every direction: he sees all things in their essence in the mirror of his intellect, making his *own* the nature of all things and thus, in his versatility, the comprehensiveness of his own nature, becomes the vinculum and copula of the universe. The crucial significance of his *humanity* lies in the passage from potency to act. Bovilius resembles both Pico and Cusanus in developing the theme of the dignity of man to daringly speculative conclusions without abandoning the common mode of paradox or contradiction. He is more unequivocally assertive than Cusanus regarding the extent of man's power of knowledge, when, for example, he says, "The world contains but man *knows* totality." The world, Bovilius says, is maximum in

GS 5069

substance while man is maximum in knowledge, though minimum in substance. In all three thinkers, we have a consistent development of the Renaissance emphasis on man's endless power of self-transformation. Man is ignorant, but *potentially* all knowledge is within him. Self-knowledge is the soul seen by itself as it turns in all directions, embracing the world and all its acts and species. Possession of universal knowledge, *encyclopaedia*, becomes, logically, the ideal of the Renaissance man. It is thus that the idea of man as microcosm—another traditional commonplace—is given a new depth of meaning and becomes the very model for Renaissance thought to adopt.

All things in the objective world are in act and their acts are their species. Man's mind is in potency to the same things. Each object that he faces inundates him with the brilliance of its *sensible act*. Man may be imagined as the focus in whom these innumerable rays of light are gathered. Like a mirror, he reflects the sensible species, and also transmutes each sensible act into *mundana lux*. He is, so to speak, a being transpierced with 'various light'.⁶⁸ He has two faces like Janus⁶⁹, one turned towards the objective world, gathering sensible species, and the other, turned inward, contemplating intellectual species within. The mirror of his mind is a *speculum vivens* which creates its own intellectual species.

VII

We can now understand that the individual's goal in the Renaissance was to become *man* in the widest sense. It was not his aim to become unique, but *universal*. Burckhardt's interpretation of the individualistic spirit or temper of the Renaissance could, therefore, be misleading. The difference between the 19th century approach to the Renaissance and ours lies precisely here. The former took the individual as the yardstick for measuring the outlook and achievement of the period. More recently, the interest has shifted to Man and his place in nature, to man as microcosm. To the Renaissance mind, as to the medieval, only the devils in hell had no place in the great chain of Being. They suffered, accordingly, the isolation of the damned. Man's position in the Chain was central. The deepest feelings of anguish, as in *Dr. Faustus* or *Macbeth*, are evoked against a background of order divinely sanctioned. The lines expressing

Faustus's frantic desire in his last speech to become anything but man present a kind of tragic reversal of the destiny reserved for the Bovilian man : endless capacity for self-transformation.

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul ?

Or why is this immortal that thou hast ?

... ..

O soul, be chang'd into little water-drops,

And fall into the ocean - ne'er be found.

(Sc. xiv, lines 163-4, 177-8).

The correct approach, therefore, to man as he appeared to the Renaissance mind should be by way of including him in the universe and including the universe in him. This, it will be seen, does not take away the importance of the individual. Rather, it merges with the dignity of man, the great theme of Renaissance thought.

The approach may be fruitful in our evaluation of the great works of Renaissance art as well. Each, be it a play of Shakespeare's or a painting of Titian's, is a *cosmos* in itself : not an object to be studied in splendid isolation, but one that enriches our experience all the more by unfolding, sometimes in a flash of quick apprehension, sometimes with slow and graceful majesty, a whole world of thought. We discover, in other words, in the body of such a work the soul or the *intelligence* revealed in the shadowing forth of ideas with which the best minds of the age were familiar. The renewal of this feeling is the authentication of that sense of the plenitude of life so characteristic of the Renaissance. Behind every object in a world that was expanding, being explored by the travellers and voyagers and observed, too, in great empiric detail, the Renaissance mind detected a shadow, or rather, a twin shadow : a shadow of mortality and a shadow of immortality. These are the spirits that haunted the Renaissance mind.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, tr. Mario Domandi, Oxford, 1963, p. 69. As Cassirer says, "the proof of the mind's *specific* perfection consists in its refusal to stand still at any attained goal and in its constant questioning and striving beyond the goal".

2. On the concept of the *intelletto* see R. J. Clements, *Michelangelo's Theory of Art*, London, 1963, pp. 14-20. The Greek word νοῦς (*nous*), as used by Plotinus to denote the perceptive faculties of the human mind in seeking beauty, became *intellectus* or *intelletto* in deliberations of the Italian humanists. In Latin *intellectus* denoted not 'intellect' but 'perception'. According to Ficino, the human faculty furthest *outside* the body is the *intellectus divinus sive angelicus*: this is what man shares with God. The use of the word is associated with the notion of *inner vision* ('visus interior'), which constitutes a part of man's Higher Soul, apart from *exterior perception* ('sensus exterior') contained in the Lower Soul. (See E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, New York, 1962, p. 136). The characteristic mode of hierarchic ascent is reflected in the order. The theme of liberation is implicit in the concept of *intelletto*. See the interpretation of Michelangelo's personal emblem in Clements, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Ascent implies growth. "The human mind", as Cusanus puts it in 'a pregnant metaphor', "is a divine seed that comprehends in its simple essence the totality of everything knowable". The Idea of the *seed* that grows connects *intellect* with *culture*. Faith in ascent of man from crude beginnings to greater perfection (cf. Note 1 above) is the foundation of civilization. See also J. C. Nelson, *The Renaissance Theory of Love*, P. 95: "Man's intellect does not have a particular essence, but is all things in potency."

On the meaning of *Geist* and *Wissenschaft*, see the translator's foreword to Cassirer, *The Logic of Humanities*, tr. C. S. Howe, Yale University Press, 1961, viii. See also the *Intro.* to *Individual and the Cosmos*, p. 3, the translator's footnote on the word 'intellectual'.

3. See Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 54: "*Intelligere* means nothing but *intus legere*."
4. *Ib.*, p. 95.
5. The close connexion between the "intellect" and the nature of "making" has been acknowledged since antiquity. Hooker, revealing the origin of the being of all things and their operation in almost exact order or law at the beginning of the First Book of *Of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (ch. 2, 3, p. 60, Folger Library edition, Harvard University Press, 1977), quotes Mercurius (Hermes) Trismegistus, 'The creator made the whole world not with hands, but by reason', and adds, 'Thus much confest by *Anaxago.* and *Plato*, terming the maker of the world an Intellectual Worker.' The creation of man as an intellectual being is therefore the logical culmination of the process of making thus conceived. It also confirms the well-established analogy between man and his Maker.
6. Cassirer, *op. cit.* p. 66.
7. *Ib.*, p. 44.
8. *Ib.*, p. 44.

9. Re : this metaphor of the garment cf. Ficino, *Comm. on the Symposium*, tr. S. Jayne, Sixth Speech, ch. iv ("On the Seven Gifts which are given by God to Man through Median Spirits"), prg. 3 : "... the souls, slipping down out of the milky way through Cancer into a body, are draped in a certain heavenly and clear wrap."
10. Extract from Cusanus, *De coniecturis* quoted in Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 45 (footnote 58) : "Intellectus autem iste in nostra anima eapropter in sensum descendit, ut sensibile ascendat in ipsum. Ascendit ad intellectum sensibile ut intelligentia ad ipsum descendit." (ii. 16).
11. H. Craig, *New Lamps for Old*, Oxford, 1966, p. 126.
12. For the theme of self-renewal as used in Shakespeare's sonnets see, for example, Sonnet 56. This may also throw some light on the form and structure of Sonnets 1-126 as a perpetually self-renewing cycle and help us in understanding the Shakespearean mode of resolution of the conflicts and struggles, outer and inner, real or imaginary, that recurrently cast their shadow. The philosophical meaning of *shadow* as part of the Platonic vocabulary used without strictness by Shakespeare also exposes the irrelevance of crude biographical or psychopathological interpretations of the Sonnets. These latter, quite possibly, vainly struggle with 'shadows', i. e., images which have artistic validity and have also a fine suggestion of philosophic depth about them.
13. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-7 and note 39 (on p. 67),
14. See Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
15. P. O. Kristeller : *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1965, pp. 70-71.
16. Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
17. See the relevant remarks in the article, "Humanism" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. XI. p. 825.
18. See C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century*, Harvard University Press, 1927, pp. vii-ix, 3-12.
Also W. K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*, Camb., Mass., 1948, ch. x, p. 331 ff. and "Conclusion", p. 389.
19. A. Hauser, *Social History of Art*, tr. S. Godman, London, 1962, Vol. 2, Ch. 1 ("The Concept of the Renaissance"), p. 1.
20. J. Huizinga, "The Problem of the Renaissance" in *Men and Ideas*, New York, 1959, p. 248, p. 278, pp. 281-287.
21. See Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 389 ff. and "The Interpretation of the Renaissance : Suggestions for a Synthesis" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XII, 1951, pp. 483-95,
22. Hauser, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 1.

23. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama* (OHEL), Oxford, 1954, p. 55.
24. D. Bush, "Humanism and the Critical Spirit" in *Prefaces to Renaissance Literature*, pp. 2-4.
25. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, tr. T. G. Rosenmeyer, Oxford, 1953, Ch. 11, pp. 246 ff.
See also E. Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline" in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Peregrine Books, 1970, p. 24.
26. O. Benesch, *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe*, London, 1965, p. 113 and Pl. 58 facing p. 114.
27. E. Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
28. The depth imparted here by Shakespeare to the theme of *re-birth* in terms of moral redemption may be contrasted with the rather pretty, exquisitely artificial treatment it receives in some of his early sonnets, e. g., Sonnet 3, line 3, wherein the theme of 'fresh repair' or 'renewal' is touched upon.

Compare, on the other hand, the mode used throughout *The Tempest* in developing the theme of 'freshly dyed weeds', of 'garments...rather new dyed than stained with salt water'.
29. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des Hommes* (1939), tr. as *Wind, Sand and Stars* by Lewis Galantière, London, 1975, p. 34.
30. E. Panofsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
31. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*, London, 1976, p. 34 and p. 84. The derivation of *natura* from *nascimento* ('coming to birth') is to be noted.
32. On the theme of being remembered by posterity ("There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality") see Browne, *Urn Burial*, extract beginning "Oblivion is not to be hired" in *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* ("The Literature of Renaissance England"), ed. Hollander and Kermode, New York, 1973, pp. 988-991. Mark especially a sentence like this (on p. 990): "But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature."
33. J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York, 1912, pp. 133-4. See also Sidney, *Apology for Poetry*, ed. Shepherd, London, 1965, p. 100. The meaning of *human freedom*, as it merges with the poet's, can be seen here very clearly: "*Only the poet, disdaining to be tled to any such subjection ... doth grow in effect into another nature, ... so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit.*" (Italics mine).

This passage is based on a few lines in Scaliger, *Poetics*, Ch. 1 : "What is called poetry describes not only what exists, but also non-existent things as if they existed, showing how they could or should exist,"

34. F. Petrarca, *Le Familiari* XXIII, 19, 78-94. See E. H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form : Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, London, 1966, ch. entitled "The Style *all'antica* : Imitation and Assimilation", pp. 122-123.
35. Seneca, *Ad Lucillum, Epistulae Morales*, Letter 84.
36. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. cit., p. 157. See A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600*, Oxford, 1940, pp. 140-1.
37. Sidney, *Ib.*, *Intro.*, p. 57. See in this connexion E. Panofsky, *Idea*, Leipzig, 1924, p. 39 ff.
38. On the superiority of painting see L. da Vinci, *Selections from the Note-books*, ed. J. A. Richter, London, 1955, pp. 194-202.
On the philosophy of images see A. Chastel, *The Age of Humanism, Europe 1480-1530*, London, 1963, pp. 80-81.
On the 'philosophy of mysteries' see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, New Haven, Yale University Press 1958, *Intro.* ('the Language of Mysteries'), pp. 13-30 ; Ch. XIII ('Pan and Proteus'), pp. 158-175 ; also, p. 179 (on 'serio ludere') and *Conclusion*, p. 190.
See also E. H. Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae : The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought" in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, London, Vol. 11, 1948, pp. 163-192.
39. Bellori in his *Discorso sull'idea* (1664) quotes Raphael directly, "Raphael of Urbino, the great master of thinking men, wrote to Castiglione about his *Galatea* : 'To paint a beautiful woman I would need to look upon many, But since there is a famine of beautiful women, I make use of a certain Idea that springs from my mind.'" See *Encyclopaedia of World Art*, Mc Graw Hill, London, 1966, XI, p. 866.
40. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. cit., p. 101.
41. "Therefore, I believe, the power of acquiring wide fame in any art or science lies in our industry and diligence ('ogni laude di qual si sia virtu') more than in the times or in the gifts of nature." (Alberti, 'Prologue' to *On Painting*, tr. J. R. Spencer, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977, p. 39). See also Hans Baron, "Querelle of Ancients and Moderns" in *Renaissance Essays* ed. Kristeller and Wiener, New York, 1968, p. 111.
42. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
43. A new and "universal rule" (*una regula universalissima*) applicable to all human situations and activities : see Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. V. Cian, Firenze, 1947, Libro Primo. xvi, pp. 63-64, lines 16-50 ; Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, tr. Sir Thomas Hoby, (Everyman's

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44. Chastel, *op. cit.*, p. 18. See also Wind, *op. cit.*, Ch. VI ("Ripeness is all"), pp. 89-99.
 45. L. da Vinci, *Notebooks*, ed. cit., Section I entitled "True Science", Subsection I, "Experience", pp. 1-6.
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 47. See Fritz Saxl, *A Heritage of Images*, (Penguin Books), 1970 Ch.4, p. 68 ff.
 48. Chastel, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
 49. *AYLI* V. iv. 110 ("Is not this a rare fellow, my lord ? he's as good at anything and yet a fool.")
 50. L. W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy*, Harvard, 1969, p. 45. See also Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
 51. Cassirer, *Ib.*, p. 49. Contrast the fable narrated by Cassirer on p. 73 re : Fortune, the 'roving and inconstant one' : "To her ... no single place is denied." Wisdom or *virtus*, man's weapon vs. Fortune, is constant and enjoys a freedom truly *human*.
 52. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 51, note 9. Chastel, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-15 ; illus. from Luca Pacioli, *De divina proportione*, Venice, 1508 on p. 216 and note on p. 340. See also L. da Vinci, *Notebooks*, ed. cit., pp. 202-3.
 53. See J. A. Mazzeo, "A Critique of Some Modern Theories of Metaphysical Poetry" in *Modern Philology*, Vol. 50, 1952, pp. 88-96.
 54. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 55. *Ib.*, p. 38.
 56. See Robin Small, *Nietzsche and a Platonist Idea of Cosmos : Centre Everywhere, Circumference Nowhere*, *JHI*, Jan. - Mar. 1983, pp. 89-104. See also Browne, *Religio Medici, and Other Works* ed. L. C. Martin, Oxford, 1964, p. 10, & p. 291 ; Wind, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
- Cited as being from Hermes Trismegistus by Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, iii, 13. "After the 12th century, the sentence ('Deus est sphaera infinita, cujus centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam'), often without the ascription to Hermes, became a commonplace." "In the definition 'sphaera infinita' was sometimes replaced by 'sphaera intelligibilis' or 'Intellectualis' whence Browne's reference, in *Garden of Cyrus* 171, 26 to 'that intelligible sphere'. See *OED*, s. v. 'Intellectual', a. 2.
57. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 39 ("But this resignation contains a positive element ...it does grasp itself as something different from that unity...it does grasp itself in its complete 'otherness'.") See also pp. 22-23 : "Everything conditioned and finite aims at the unconditioned, without ever being able to attain it...in this realm of the relative, there can be no exactness...all our empirical knowledge remains a probability". With this concept of

'probability', of 'conjecture', compare Sidney's argument re : the higher truth value of 'an example', which 'only informs a conjectured likelihood' (*Apology*, ed. cit., p. 110, lines 25-26), of, as we might say, a 'surmised shape'.

58. Cassirer, *Ib.*, p. 31 and also note 29 on the same page. See also Wind, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-180.

59. Though the context is different and the mood is one of despair that arises from *contrast* in direction, Donne, *Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward*, lines 33-35 may be compared :

Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye,
They're present yet unto my memorie,
For that looks towards them ; and thou look'st towards mee.

(Italics mine).

60. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

61. *Ib.* p. 88. Rice, *the Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* Cambridge, Mass., 1958, p. 115. Chastel, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

62. Cf. A. Marvell, *Thoughts in a Garden*, lines 43-46, 51-56.

63. Wind, *op. cit.*, p. 185. See also p. 173 on Pico's exposition in the *Commento* that man was "originally of a Janus-nature."

PRE-WAR FEMINISM IN LAWRENCE'S 'THE RAINBOW'

SHANTA MAHALANOBIS

I

THE last few chapters of *The Rainbow* show Ursula Brangwen, Lawrence's working class protagonist, associating with the New Women of that era (1890 - 1910) at school and college. Ursula's frantic bid for social and economic independence from her parents followed by her struggle for identity in a man's world reflect in microcosm the feminist agitations of the period. The suffragettes strove for votes, the suffragists for personal freedom and reform, the educationists for equal rights in academia as students and as teachers. Inroads were being made into the entrenched citadels of male dominance. Winifred Inger, Ursula's class-teacher in her last year at school, was a product of Newnham College, Cambridge and believed in the 'vote'; Maggie Schofield, Ursula's colleague at St. Philip's school Ilkeston, was a suffragette sympathiser; Dorothy Russell, Ursula's friend at Nottingham College "spent her spare moments slaving for the Women's Social and Political Union"¹ (Ch XIV P, 432). Hermione Roddice, Ursula's contender for Birkin's love in "Women in Love" had read political economy at Oxford and flaunted her intellectual superiority when women intellectuals were considered strange rarities. These fictionalized feminists had their antecedents in Emily Davies and Jemima Clough the founders of the two earliest women's colleges at Cambridge-Girton and Newnham; and in Mrs. Pankhurst who led the Women's Social and Political union.

"From Girton and Newnham and Somerville and Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford (all founded at roughly the same time) the new generation of highly educated college women went out and ploughed back into the educational field all they had been taught."

"They went to schools throughout the country, where they set a new pace, a new standard, which in itself revolutionized girls education."²

At about the same time, in America, Edith Wharton, the novelist and short story writer, wrote with unconcealed irony of the pseudo-intellectuality often found in a family of woman intellectuals. Mrs. Amyot, the pretty, widowed heroine of her short story, *The Pelican*, has an academically impressive matri-lineal family tree. Her mother had written a blank verse poem on the Fall of Man, an aunt had translated Euripides and another was dean of a girls' college.

"With such a family the poor child's fate was sealed in advance. The only way of paying her husband's debts and keeping the baby clothed was to be intellectual."³

This meant peddling second-hand ideas and half-remembered information in drawing-room lectures.

Lawrence's own response to the feminists was ambivalent. On the one hand he had woman friends in Eastwood and Croydon, actively involved in suffragism in varying degrees. He corresponded regularly with Sally Hopkin. Alice Dax, Blanche Jennings and Louie Burrows. He read Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labour*, *Woman and War* and *Parasitism*. He occasionally attended suffragette meetings. On the other hand he spotted the dreadful abstract-ness of the suffragettes. Writing of Alice Dax to Blanche Jennings he observed :

"—do you remark an increasing, personal, individual, particular interest which takes the place of her one-time sweeping general interests-in Women, for instance instead of in a woman and some women ; in humanity rather than in men."⁴

In late 1912 in Italy with Frieda, restlessly waiting for Weekley to divorce Frieda, he wrote to Sally Hopkin :

"I shall do a novel about Love Triumphant one day. I shall do my work for women, better than the suffrage."⁵

It was the living and being of an individual woman rather than the vague generalisations of '*the cause*' that deeply concerned Lawrence and led to the specific realities (though fictional) of Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* (with earlier composite titles of *The Sisters* and *The Wedding Ring*). That these novels were not flippant nor jeering but were trying

to "express a new thing in sincerity" about "woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative"⁶ is communicated in a letter to his friend Edward Garnett in April 1914.

Kate Millett, the militant feminist, has pointed out that as the feminist movement was at its height during the years of *The Rainbow*, "Lawrence was compelled to deal with it."⁷

The compulsion grew from his pained insight into the agonies of a young, working-class woman being broken into teaching at St. Philip's School, brutally dominated by the headmaster Mr. Harby. Ursula has to crush her natural instincts and sensibilities to fight and survive "in the world of work and man's convention" (ch XIII p 406). "Oh, why had she leagued herself to this evil system where she must brutalize herself to live? Why had she become a school teacher, why, why? (Ch XIII, p 406).

She soon realises the dichotomies and contradictions of the proclaimed feminist goals of independence and equality.

"She was no longer Ursula Brangwen, daughter of William Brangwen. She was also Standard Five teacher in St. Philip's School, and it was a case now of being Standard Five teacher and nothing else. For she could not escape.

Neither could she succeed. That was her horror" (Ch XIII P-390)

Her isolation, her alienation from her family and her class, her sense of ineptitude were shared by Lawrence himself during his school-teaching years at Croydon. But for women in that milieu it also affected their prospects of love and marriage.

"As one of the Inspectors pointed out at the beginning of the 1860s, the position of the school mistress was 'a very peculiar one'. "It separated her very much from the class to which she had originally belonged, while it did not bring her socially into contact with a very different class and therefore she was very much isolated. She could not marry a labourer nor an artisan who was not an educated man, and she was not very likely, generally speaking, to marry a person very much above herself."⁸

II

Ursula gropes for permanence, richness in the experience of love even as her friends warn against its transience or its futility. A complex network of highly individual stances emerge in these intimate female tête-à-têtes. The voice of militant feminism is heard in Winifred Inger's anti-male tirade.

"Love is a dead idea to them. They don't come to one and love one, they come to an idea and they say, 'You are my idea', so they embrace themselves". (Ch XII, P-343).

She later marries Ursula's uncle Tom Brangwen for companionship. "She does not love him". (Ch XV, P-434).

The voice of the melancholy 'last romantics is heard in Maggie's obsession with *carpe florem*. To her "love was the flower of life" to be plucked and enjoyed for the brief hour of its duration." (Ch XIII, P-411).

Dorothy Russell's views are simplistic, conventional and persistent. To her love is an end in itself and is logically completed in marriage. Ursula's gropings for and longings for imagined qualities in men other than Skrebensky, Dorothy dismisses and simplifies as

"hankering after something else, something that this man did not give her." (Ch XV, P-476).

Despite her feminist associations the voice of traditional morality triumphs in Dorothy's admonitions to Ursula.

"The question is, what *do* you want?" propounded Dorothy. "Is it just other men?"

Ursula was silenced. This was her own dread. Was she just promiscuous?

'Because if it is, continued Dorothy, you'd better marry Anton. The other can only end badly.

So out of fear of herself Ursula was to marry Skrebensky. (Ch. XV, P-476).

But not before she had baffled the morally enchained though politically liberated Dorothy with her uninhibited, frankly discriminating choices in love. She is truly individual in her perception of various kinds of worth in men other than Anton.

"Only there are plenty of things that aren't in Anton that I would love in the other man'.

'What for instance?'

'It doesn't matter. But a sort of strong understanding in some men, and then a dignity, something unquestioned that there is in working men, and then a jolly, reckless passionateness that you see—a man who could really let go" (Ch. XV, P-475).

Such a free and unreserved expression of choices had not been granted her mother Anna or her grand-mother Lydia. Middle class women (urban or rural) in the nineteenth century had been expected to lead lives of patience and resignation with marriage as the only ambition of an unmarried girl.

"However, it too had its pit falls, for marriage was held up as a holy occasion, demanding life-long sacrifice and submission. Through her constant attention to her husband's wishes and deference to his opinions, a woman was expected to show her appreciation of his God-given, masculine superiority. Any intellectual gifts which she might possess were to be concealed and repressed for his sake."⁹

This position was startlingly reversed by the Militant Suffrage Movement, led by Mrs. Pankhurst, with its confession of sexual enmity against male exploitation in government, at Universities, and, of course, in marriage. Everything boiled down to a fight between men and women.

"Marriage, in its old fashioned aspect as the union of two lives, they repudiate as a one sided tyranny; and maternity, for which after all women primarily exist, they regard as degradation"¹⁰, wrote a woman anti-suffragette in 1891.

By 1907, strident, sensationalist militancy mellowed into the Women's movement led by Mrs. Millicent Fawcett with its more positive programme.

'They did not regard their work as an attack upon men but rather as a reform for the good of all, and the next step in human progress.'¹¹

The *cause* now focussed attention on women's peculiarly personal sufferings and discontents, "their economic dependence, their conventional limitations, and all the multitude of trifles which made them hate being women and long to have been men".¹²

Surprisingly, their programme did not specifically include sexual liberation although the sex-conscious journals, *Free Woman* and *New Free Woman* openly discussed double moral standards, prostitution, contraception and birth control. Mrs. Josephine Butler's plea for legal reform to improve the lot of prostitutes was strictly limited in its applicability.

"Discussion of female sexuality was still largely taboo and to many feminists sexual freedom meant simply an increase in the twin evils of venereal disease and prostitution."¹³ The *Freewoman* did however draw attention to the individual woman's *spiritual* awakening as more important to her emancipation than the social, political and economic independence claimed by the Women's Movement, and the radical sex psychologists of Edwardian England, Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, focussed interest on the nature of human sexuality. Advocates of the women's movement, they boldly challenged the cramping effect of Victorian prudery and ignorance. In America, in 1912, the radical ferment was felt in Greenwich Village, New York, swarming with democratic artists and thinkers, exponents of the new insurgent spirit and of the sex-revolution. These pre-war Villagers were rebels trying to create a society favourable to individual self expression.

"They had been rebels, full of proud illusions. They made demands on life itself, that it furnish them with beautiful adventures, honest friendships, love freely given and returned in an appropriate setting. Now with illusions shattered, they were cynics."¹⁴

In England, at Newnham College, Cambridge a group of 'avant garde' women students discussed unashamedly everything under the sun. They reacted with awe to liberated behaviour. In 1905

Ms. F. M. Wilson, one of this number, expresses her bewildered admiration for Amber Reeves lecturing on the *relativity of morals* :

"To me Amber was intellect personified. When, soon after her speech, it was whispered that she had run off to Paris for a week-end with H. G. Wells, a story the dons were trying to hush up, she became more dashing than anyone else we knew."¹⁵

The sex revolution had arrived.

It was a few years later between 1912 and 1913, that Lawrence was propounding his sexual theory in the *Study of Thomas Hardy* and writing *The Rainbow*. He certainly knew the work of Schopenhauer (*On Women* and *The Metaphysics of Love*) and Edward Carpenter (*Love's coming of Age* and *The Intermediate Sex*). He came to Freud through Frieda, a great Freud admirer for his libertarian creed of sexual freedom. Along with these eminent sex psychologists he explored the unknown in the female, 'the wealth of the female' that brings gladness to a man. In the *Study of Thomas Hardy* Lawrence does not set male qualities above the female qualities though he does adhere to the traditional divisions of man as active, 'doing' and woman as passive, 'being'. He sees the male and the female spirit as essentially complementary, without male dominance.

"In life then, no new thing has ever arisen or can arise save out of the impulse of the male upon the female, the female upon the male".

"and normally, the centre the turning point of a man's life is his sex life, the centre and swivel of his being is the sexual act. Upon this turns the whole rest of his life, from this emanates every motion he betrays".

"The supreme effort each man makes, for himself, is the effort to clasp as a hub the woman who shall be the axle, compelling him to true motion, without aberration".

"the vital desire of every woman is that she shall be clasped as axle to the hub of the man, that his motion shall portray her motionlessness, convey her static being into movement, complete and radiating out into infinity, starting from her stable eternity,

and reaching eternity again, after having covered the whole of time."¹⁹

'The Rainbow', composed at about the same time, lays the same emphasis on the significance of the sexual relationship for Ursula, for her mother Anna, and for her grandmother Lydia. Later, in 1916, in *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, Lawrence rejected this assumption as a concession to female importance, to the concept of the dominating Magna Mater, to the primacy of the female mode of being. This had also been expounded by Otto Gross, one of the principal spokesmen of the German 'erotic movement'. Lawrence also wrote to Cynthia Asquith—

"it's no use the men looking to the women for salvation, nor the women looking to sensuous satisfaction for their fulfilment. There must be another Word "

By the 1920's Lawrence saw the threat posed to society by feminine ideas and ideals, the threat to male superiority. In his essay *The Real Thing* he observed :

"Perhaps the greatest revolution of modern times is the emancipation of women ; and perhaps the deepest fight for two thousand years and more has been the fight for woman's independence, or freedom, call it what you will. The fight was deeply bitter, and, it seems to me, it is won. It is even going beyond and becoming a tyranny of women, of the individual woman in the house, and of the feminine ideas and ideals in the world."²⁰

The Rainbow however, continues to embody Lawrence's pre-war sympathies with the female principle concretised in the matriarchal Lydia and Anna, and then in the modern emancipated Ursula.

III

Ursula and her circle of friends were the first generation of English women to taste the fruits of feminist emancipation. Like their real life contemporaries at school and college they formed intellectually and emotionally satisfying friendships with their own sex, sometimes bordering on homo-sexuality. Ms Wilson, the Newnhamite already quoted records in her reminiscence :

"The slow exploration of another human being, the discovery of shared perplexities and interests, the delight in our new companion's gifts, and, may be beauty, ... these were excitements."¹¹

Edward Carpenter saw the importance of such friendships, even the homogenic ones, for the feminist campaign.

"In may be said that a certain strain in the relations between the opposite sexes has come about owing to a growing consciousness among women that they have been oppressed and unfairly treated by men, and a growing unwillingness to ally themselves unequally in marriage—that this strain has caused the women-kind to draw more closely together and to cement alliances of their own."¹²

F. R. Leavis described Ursula and her sister Gudrun as socially mobile, "educated, intelligent and conscious, no longer belonging to the working class into which they were born".

Yet, for all this, Ursula's identity is not entirely derived from feminism, nor from the sex psychology of Lawrence and his contemporaries. Her justification in the novel is not merely as a woman, but as a significant woman, her significance being established in the vividly intense language used in the rendering of her experiences. Her abandoned enjoyment of Anton Skrebensky's sensuality, the cold horror of the satiation that follows; the totally unmerited exaltation of Anton as one of "the sons of god" who took to wife "the daughters of men" and the shocked realisation of his dreary conventionality, are the entirely unique and unclassified reactions of a remarkable woman.

Ursula brings to all her experiences, human or religious, a totality of being, a fullness of sensibility. Her initial responses are always spontaneous, instinctive, generous. With Skrebensky she felt

"free as a leopard that sends up its raucous cry in the night. She had the potent dark stream of her own blood, she had the glimmering core of fecundity, she had her mate, her complement, her sharer in fruition. So, she had all, everything."¹³

In the first flush of her love, and his attentions, she transcends individuality.

"She was no mere Ursula Brangwen. She was Woman, she was the whole of Woman in the human order." (p-444).

Then comes the whirl-wind courtship, free and uninhibited through Beldover, London, Paris, Rouen, Oxford, sometimes with her family or his friends, but more often on their own. (Chaperons and pre-marital chastity had become equally obsolete for the modern woman.) But euphoria gives way to banality, and judgment, discrimination, individuality, in fact all that the feminists had worked for, struggle with subterranean experience. Skrebensky's derived views on the larger issues of life — war, democracy, Empire — infuriate her. He falls so short of her dream of Biblical giants 'the sons of god'. She does not esteem him, nor does she receive more than a limited, transient physical pleasure from him.

"He aroused no fruitful fecundity in her. He seemed added up, finished. She knew him all round, not on any side did he lead into the unknown. Poignant, almost passionate appreciation she felt for him, but none of the dreadful wonder, none of the rich fear, the connexion with the unknown or the reverence of love". (P-474). All this is an essential part of the Lawrentian love-ethic, of an individual coming into fulness of being only when he/she is "opened in the bloom of pure relationship to the Sun, the entire living cosmos."²⁶ : a relationship that Skrebensky in his ordinariness could neither experience in himself nor induce in his mate. So Ursula finally repudiates him.

In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence's picture of Ursula necessarily remains incomplete as this novel and its sequel *Women in Love* had originally been conceived as a single work. Caught in a deadlock between the banality of marriage with Skrebensky and reverting to the 'bondage' of teaching, she chooses the latter and is genuinely relieved at Skrebensky's marriage of convenience with his boss's daughter. She is even prepared to accept single responsibility for her unborn child, but even that child is lost, aborted. 'There would be no child' (p-494).

Ursula now aspires to the man who 'would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged'. (p-494) She waits questioning and uncertain, for both she and her sister Gudrun share the chilling fear

of lonely spinsterhood. In *Women in Love* (ch I), their surface poise and *sangfroid* betray a worrying concern with marriage. They are contemptuous of the stereotype husband and the inevitable children and yet the alternative of remaining single seems more bleak.

But do you hope to get anywhere by just marrying ?

"It seems to be the inevitable next step", said Gudrun. Ursula pondered this with a little bitterness. She was a class mistress herself in Willey Green Grammar School, as she had been for some years.¹⁷

Later, Ursula discovers Rupert Birkin, Gudrun discovers Gerald Crich. Formed by the social and moral challenges of the feminist milieu, they now leave this milieu behind, seeking their *natural* fulfilment as women. Ursula's resignation of her post as class-mistress at Willey Green School is a symbolic gesture. No doubt her relationship with Birkin is projected as a kind of transfiguration.

"This was release at last. She had had lovers, who had known passion. But this was neither love nor passion. It was the daughters of men coming back to the sons of God, the strange inhuman sons of God who are in the beginning."¹⁸

But Ursula's record of shattered illusions leaves us wondering. Is this transfiguration convincing? Is discovery of the significant male a woman's sole fulfilment? What if the imagined significance wears out? Such vital questions, not particularly feminist, are left unanswered in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

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T. S. ELIOT AS A POET-CRITIC*

K. N. PHUKAN

THE question whether the poet or the non-poet is better qualified to criticize poetry appears to be of a kind that spins out endless controversies by stubbornly refusing to settle down to a common-sensical solution. This essay seeks to disentangle the issue from the cumulative irrelevancies of passions and prejudices which continually surround it and to demonstrate in the process a valuable feature of the criticism of poetry by a poet of T. S. Eliot's stature.

To be sure, the interests that a man of intellect and sensibility pursues with zeal in his ordinary life are bound to bear significantly upon any criticism of art that he may choose to write. At any rate, it is no error to affirm, as Eliot himself affirms at times in the manner of a beleaguered controversialist, that the criticism of poetry by a poet is likely to have distinctive features of its own. The truth, when thus stated, appears unexciting and is perhaps unlikely to invite controversy. But in actual history, claims and counter-claims have been made in this regard in unabashedly invidious ways. On the one hand, there have always been poets, including Eliot himself, seeking to maintain that the poets are the best critics of poetry and that the criticism of poetry by non-poets suffers from crucially important deficiencies. On the other hand, it has been held time and again by eminent theorists of criticism, that the criticism of poetry by poets is not criticism proper, for it violates basic norms of the trade.

The doubts that poets sometimes express about the value of the criticism of poetry by non-poets and similar doubts expressed by professional critics about criticism of poetry by poets, raise, when

* This essay has been written making use of research done for the author's Leeds University Ph.D. thesis on Eliot. Mrs Valerie Eliot's permission, dated 21 December, 1982 to quote from a letter of Eliot yet unpublished, is gratefully acknowledged.

taken together, interesting and not entirely fruitless questions. One such question, which figures in Dryden's "Preface" to his *Secret Love*,¹ is whether the poet can judge his own poetry perceptively and impartially. Dryden's own answer is that the poet himself is the more reliable judge in matters of technique but that the affective side of poetry should be open to the more detached criticism of the common reader. Dr Johnson, who calls this problem raised by Dryden a "curious question", approves of Dryden's solution as just.² Indeed, there is not much acrimony in the way Dryden handles this matter in his "Preface", but actually throughout the eighteenth century, the antagonism between poets and their professional critics has been direct and insistent, and both poet-critics and non-poet critics were personal and bitter in their attacks on each other. Of this, a passage from Swift's poem "On Poetry: A Rhapsody"³ — a passage in which he applied such phrases as "the Base" and "The Vermin" to non-poet critics of poetry — is representative enough evidence. And for an evidence in prose of the usual disparagement of the professional critic as parasitic and unknowledgeable, one may turn to this metaphorical statement of Dryden: "Does the ivy undermine the oak which supports its weakness? What labour would it cost them to put in a better line, then the worst of those which they expunge in a true poet?"⁴

The rather ancient feud that this essay seeks initially to scrutinize in brief has always had in England very respectable connections. Indeed, before Dryden, it was Ben Jonson who, in his stern and prohibitive tone, said: "To judge of Poets is only the facultie of poets; and not of all Poets but the best."⁵ This Jonsonian dogma may be seen as spinning out throughout the history of English literary criticism a seemingly interminable debate which, in the present century, enmeshes Eliot and quite a handful of his contemporaries, both poets and non-poets.

Turning from Jonson, Dryden and Swift to more recent effusions on this curious dispute, we find such statements as this of Oscar Wilde: "It is exactly because a man cannot do a thing that he is the proper judge of it". And to Jonson's stern fiat to non-poets, here is Wilde's challenge: "That very concentration of vision which makes a man an artist, limits by its sheer intensity his faculty of fine

appreciation".⁶ Wilde develops these views even further and his views have ramifications with which we are not here concerned. But it is against such assertions as these by Wilde that we must place what may be called reaffirmations of the Jonsonian standpoint by Eliot and Ezra Pound, who in the early decades of this century pioneered the creation of a radically new idiom in poetry and its criticism partly through a process of their reaction against Wilde and his generation.

In 1913, Pound gave this advice to young poets: "Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work".⁷ And after Pound, it is Eliot who takes up, time and again, this question of the relative value of the criticism of poets and non-poets. In trying to arrive at a strict definition of literary criticism, Eliot takes the differences between the criticism of poets and that of non-poets as of considerable importance. He frequently analyses these differences and his analysis, though not always free from certain errors of excess, provides fundamental insights on which his own practice of criticism must be seen to be based.

Eliot believes the substance of criticism to be the result of a disciplined mode of perceptive and analytical response of the whole mind to a work of art. For him, there is a distinction to be made between criticism that is primarily literary, and that which moves away, by many indirections, political, psychological and sociological, from the analysis and appreciation of a poem or a novel as a work of art. It is indeed not impossible to point to some criticism which is only remotely literary; and some criticism openly abandons all such concerns and proceeds to elicit from poetry ideas and insights in themselves valuable but not relevant to the criticism of poetry as poetry. For serious readers these matters are not unworthy of attention, for they explain to a large extent why so much of criticism is occupied with its own fascinatingly contentious character. This contentiousness appears most acutely when the argument is about who is or is not qualified to criticize poetry and with what credentials. Thus, Eliot's theory of criticism admits a classification which has reference to the antecedents of the critic with regard to activities other than his vocation of criticism. The results of such inquiries about antecedents need not ideally enter the substance of any theory

of literary criticism in direct and important ways. And it seems therefore that the relevant question is not whether the poet's or the non-poet's criticism is intrinsically and generally superior but what real and analysable differences exist in their findings about poetry. Eliot at his best insists that his own criticism should be appreciated as that of a poet and with its peculiar share of merits and limitations.⁸ He assumes the differences between the criticism of poets and that of non-poets to be real and important. He also thinks that the best criticism of poetry by poets like Dryden, Dr Johnson, Wordsworth and Coleridge establishes certain permanent standards for all literary criticism. This means that Eliot's distinction between the criticism of poets and non-poets is linked to his concept of literary criticism in general and that there is in Eliot a bias in favour of the criticism of poets and against that of non-poets.

This curious dispute here scrutinized becomes even more interesting when we notice seemingly detached academic theorizing on literary criticism with a severe bias against the criticism of poets as in an essay by René Wellek⁹. Wellek generally appears to argue in his essay that the poet's criticism turns to "anti criticism" by questioning its very basis as an activity of the intellect engaged in theorizing and historifying. In his rather supercilious attack on Eliot and other poet-critics, the contention is that the poet's being also a critic is good neither for poetry nor for criticism. Wellek takes Eliot's occasional pronouncements on the limitations of the poet's criticism as "embarrassing self-depreciation"¹⁰ and proceeds to exemplify the "egocentricity and narrowness" of the poet's criticism. He dismissed such criticism as "an irrelevancy" and as "anticriticism" and "antiintellectualism" for failing to interpret and judge. Neglecting to examine the evidence found throughout in Eliot's prose, Wellek maintains that Eliot dismisses analysis as a tool of criticism and concludes that Eliot finally turns "against criticism". He also hints that Eliot's great reputation as a poet-critic is responsible for certain younger poet-critics seeking to "deny intellectual coherence and historical growth to the enterprise", by turning their back on "theory, poetics and history" as necessary adjuncts of criticism. Wellek's final verdict is that "the union of poet and critic" in the same person is a matter to be regretted and that any attempt at such union or at being "the integrated man of

both sensibility and intellect" is the result of a misguided and foredoomed desire for being "original whole men" in the manner of the Renaissance.¹¹

Pointless and befogged by passions and prejudices though the matter may thus appear, the continuing controversy can yet be seen to have generated not all of its heat in vain. At any rate, in Eliot's preoccupation with it, valuable insights finally emerge, for he begins by assuming, contrary to Wellek's contention, that criticism of poetry is at all time an instinctive and fruitful activity and comes to accept that the reader's and the poet's points of views can be complementary in criticism, when taken as the "common pursuit of true judgement".¹² And this is something that Dr Johnson, who is often a dangerous person to disagree with, has been seen earlier to have approved as just with reference to Dryden's "curious question".

It appears quite rational to affirm that we can perhaps never find generally valid and abstract grounds for conclusive theorizing in favour of one or the other type of critics as having exclusive or greater right or ability to criticize poetry. This is because any work of criticism can choose from among widely variable and legitimate emphases. Still, there is at least a chance that the criticism of the poet-critic may be found to differ in a somewhat radical fashion from the criticism of non-poets in certain kinds of insights it affords. The inner, active process of creation certainly involves more of sensibility or more of the "mind" as a whole and does so in a more intense and complex way than the process of critical enjoyment, review and commentary. But it must also be said that the enjoyment, and through it, the complete possession of a work of art involve analogous resources of the mind. In view of this alone, poets as readers of poetry and other readers who are not poets, appear to stand more or less on the same ground as critics of poetry. And if poets and non-poets have nearly the same equipments as readers of poetry, we may ask why poets are sometimes thought to be, as critics, better than, or at least different from, other readers. This question is neither meaningless nor unanswerable.

Eliot seems to suggest in the following extract from "Ben Jonson" that the mind responding to a work of art has a sensation

somewhat analogous to that of creative imagination. This sensation at its best is not experienced for the purpose of being led into pseudo-creative activity in criticism itself as Goethe and Coleridge allegedly had been in their criticism of *Hamlet*.¹³ The passage from Eliot's "Ben Jonson" is this :

It is not that the value of poetry is only its value to living poets for their own work, but appreciation is akin to creation, and true enjoyment of poetry is related to the stirring of suggestion, the stimulus that a poet feels in his enjoyment of other poetry. Jonson has provided no creative stimulus for a long time : consequently we must look back as far as Dryden — precisely a poetic practitioner who learned from Jonson — before we find a living criticism of Jonson's work.¹⁴

Eliot surely does not mean by this that appreciation is one thing for poets and quite another for non-poets, nor does he mean that "true enjoyment" is denied or only partially given to non-poets, for they too, when they truly enjoy poetry, must be appreciating and so feeling something "akin to creation". But it is true that the stimulus, when felt, has uses for the non-poet only in his criticism, but for the poet it has uses in poetry as well as in his criticism. The poet-critic, whose poetry has absorbed, for example, the influence of Jonson's poetry through his criticism of it, can better initiate a living criticism of Jonson. Such a poet-critic can make available to readers a critical apparatus signifying the peculiarly Jonsonian mode of sensibility. The awareness of this peculiar sensibility, apart from being stated in criticism, can be enlivened and authenticated in the poet-critic's own poetry in contemporary English. Eliot however is far from meaning that all poet-critics do what Dryden for example did for his age in relation to Jonson's poetry, for, as he points out, a poet-critic like Arnold lacks this dimension which Dryden has.¹⁵

These considerations appear to be given an exact and immediate point in a generalized statement in one of Eliot's early essays in *Chapbook* :

The critical genius is inseparable from the creative. Not that the most "creative" genius is necessarily the best writer of criticism ; but in a more general way, if a people could no longer produce an artist, it could no longer produce a critic. For if we ceased to be able to create works of art, we should certainly cease to be able to appreciate them. And, for the present generation, I think it is true to say that conditions which may

be considered to be unfavourable to the writing of good poetry are unfavourable to the writing of good criticism.¹⁶

Here again is the same emphasis that a keen sensibility is the point of departure for both creation and criticism. The passage bears out how closely interrelated were the problems of poetry and criticism to a young poet and critic pioneering the direction of poetry and criticism on radically new lines in the 1920's. Among other conclusions Eliot reaches in the same essay is this: "It is fitting that poets should write about poetry".¹⁷ The point is worth emphasizing for in all ages there are those who maintain, as René Wellek does, that poets should not write criticism. Beyond doubt, the fact that an appreciation of technique as it were from within is involved, gives the poet-critic an extra edge as an innovator in criticism. However, in "The Perfect Critic" written at about the same time as the *Chapbook* essay, Eliot says, more dogmatically, that "the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same person".¹⁸ Indeed, it is possible to show with extracts from the *Chapbook* essay itself that the early Eliot saw it fit to restrict his idea of the most proper criticism of poetry to that of poet-critics alone. This is how he overstates :

Rémy de Gourmont is an interesting poet, but he is, I think, more remarkable as a critic. But unless he had been a poet he could not have been a critic. The critic is interested in technique — technique in the widest sense. You cannot understand a book on mathematics, unless you are actively, not merely passively, a mathematician, unless you can perform operations, not merely follow them. And you cannot understand the technique of poetry unless you are to some extent capable of performing this operation. Only the person who is working in that way can understand their values.....And to the poet only the criticism of poets is useful.¹⁹

Whose criticism the poet finds useful is another matter, but what is clearly illogical in Eliot is his equation of the intelligibility of the value of words in poetry with that of mathematical signs. These signs do not carry with them an awareness of concrete reality while words do precisely that.²⁰ In any case, it seems true to say that if the proper critic of poetry is always to be a practising poet and preferably a great poet, literary criticism would suffer from a lack of change, variety and development

and would thus affect the conditions of creative writing as well. To have one type of literary criticism alone – be that the greatest – will not be conducive to its growth. Dryden, as we have seen earlier, knew this and Dr Johnson gave his assent to Dryden's good sense.

There is evidence, too, that Eliot himself continues throughout his work to modify his early stand that poets alone are qualified to write proper criticism of poetry. "There ought to be honourable vacancies", he says in an essay written even earlier than the *Chapbook* essay, "for men who like to write about literature without themselves having a 'method' to deliver: without (in cruder terms) being creative writers".²¹ Again, in 1923, in "The Function of Criticism", Eliot asks for "the common pursuit of true judgement", that is, for collaborative efforts between different types of critics. The "scholar" and the "practitioner" now begin to be seen as supplementing each other's work in the wide field of literary criticism. Eliot also begins to be more precise in isolating the distinctive quality of the poet's criticism of poetry. The poet-critic, he says in 1947, is to be "able, when he is the right poet talking about the right poet, to make an old masterpiece actual, giving it contemporary importance and persuading his audience that it is interesting, exciting, enjoyable and active".²² Further, in reviewing his own literary criticism in 1961 in "To Criticize the Critic", Eliot wishes that his literary criticism should be regarded as a "by product of his creative activity".²³ But here again he seems to reaffirm his acceptance of types of literary criticism other than his own. He says: "... in so far, as literary criticism is purely literary, I believe the criticism of artists writing about their own art is of greater intensity, and carries more authority, though the area of the artist's competence may be much narrower".²⁴ This certainly is no arrogation of the criticism of poetry to poets alone.

"I was in reaction", Eliot says in 1961, "not only against Georgian poetry, but against Georgian criticism; I was writing in a context which the reader of to-day has either forgotten, or has never experienced".²⁵ What certainly was Eliot's tendency to undervalue the non-poet's criticism and to overvalue the criticism of poets, can be understood when all his early work is seen as the reaction

of a man embattled against certain aspects of ninetyism. But Eliot lived long enough to revise, if not revoke, some of the excesses of this reaction which had given him his start.

"At one time", says Eliot, "I was inclined to take the extreme position, that the only critics worth reading were the critics who practised, and practised well, the art of which they wrote".²⁶ Continuing, he says, "But I had to stretch this frame to make some important inclusions; and I have since been in search of a formula which should cover everything I wished to include, even if it included more than I wanted".²⁷ There occurs a similar remark in an unpublished letter to C. S. Lewis: "I don't think I should go so far as to say that 'only poets could criticise Milton's poetry *qua* poetry', which, as you say, is tantamount to the doctrine that only poets could criticise poetry *qua* poetry".²⁸ These certainly are indications of explicit modifications of his early views regarding the poet-critic. Indeed it may be said that Eliot's search for the "formula" has been continuous with his developing theory of literary criticism. At any rate, with the discarding of what he calls the "extreme position", Eliot begins to be clearer about the poet's "peculiar limitations" as a critic, while continuing to emphasize his peculiar "qualification".²⁹ Significantly, he considers it good for the poet, if he is also a critic, to avoid certain areas of literary criticism, for example, the extreme theorizing about the nature and uses of poetry, that is, aesthetics.

Very generally, it may be that the criticism of poetry by non-poets is likely to suffer from a certain deficiency of sensibility which also goes hand in hand with an inadequate knowledge of technique. The limitations of a poet-critic's criticism may rise from an excess of the source of its strength: specialization of sensibility. It is possible that Eliot's own "sharpness of sensibility"³⁰ in his response to the idiom, texture and technique of Elizabethan, Jacobean and metaphysical poetry explains partly his early hostility to Milton's poetry. And in this context, the change in his attitude to Milton is a sign of new development of sensibility.

Eliot's criticism, being that of a poet-critic, is throughout characterized by his own mode of sensibility as seen in his poetry.

But sensibility is never in a state of stasis : it is modified by an accrual of new awareness. The final aim of this essay therefore is to show with a concrete example that this new development of sensibility in Eliot the poet — a development that is also a discovery as a poet-critic — enters directly into the substance of his criticism of poetry and serves, more than any other quality in it, to mark it out from the criticism of non-poets. To isolate this quality we can turn to a brief examination of Eliot's criticism of Milton.

In "Milton I" (1936), Eliot is concerned with Milton from a clearly delimited point of view : that of the contemporary poet eager to learn from the poetry of the past. Thus looking at Milton, Eliot concludes that "Milton's poetry could only be an influence against which we still have to struggle".²¹ In "Milton II" (1947), there is no change in the basic approach, for once again Eliot asks whether Milton's poetry can be a "living force" in contemporary English poetry. And now he arrives at a very different conclusion, which is that Milton is one of those great poets "whom poets to-day might study with profit".²² But the conclusion most useful for our purpose here is this :

If the poetry of the rest of this century, takes the line of development which seems to me...the right course, it will discover new and more elaborate patterns of a diction now established. In this search it might have much to learn from Milton's extended verse structure ; it might also avoid the danger of a *servitude* to colloquial speech and to current jargon. It might also learn that the music of verse is strongest in poetry which has a definite meaning expressed in the properest words.²³

This statement is a discovery not only of a new awareness of Milton's poetry but also of a new possibility in himself as a modern poet in relation to Milton's poetic idiom. In truth, there is considerable evidence that Eliot, the poet of *Four Quartets*, has already learnt what he thinks poets in general can learn from Milton in his time. This new criticism of Milton must thus be seen as authenticated by the actual experience of a poet who in the following passage from his "East Coker" in particular has employed with perfect control a delightfully elaborate diction and an extended simile in obvious contrast to the laconic and ironical speech of his earlier poetry. One can even say that here if anywhere Eliot has experimented with an "extended

Eliot holds that a "fact" is "not a judgement simply", but "an objective asserted"; that "it contains an internal judging and an external recognizing of the validity of the judgment".⁸⁷ It is only a major innovating poet like Eliot who is equipped to give poetic substance to a fact of this kind and also to validate it in critical analysis and observation, for this was the result of bringing his critical appreciation of Milton's poetry into a vital contact with his own creative impulse that was as it were "throbbing, waiting".⁸⁸

Thus, if Eliot's criticism is approached without some of the current prejudices, it will appear that he has written no "anticriticism" and that his critical thought is nourished on foundations which are solid and fertilizing. And this is no exaggeration to say that Eliot is a poet-critic of the rank of Dryden, Dr Johnson, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Eliot appears, in addition, to have as a poet-critic certain qualities which at one time he had affectionately attributed to F. H. Bradley: "the melancholy grace, the languid mastery, of the late product".⁸⁹

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EUGENE O'NEILL AND THE CONCEPT OF "PSYCHIC FATE"

KRISHNA SEN

EUGENE O'Neill is on record as strenuously denying any influence at all upon his work of the theories of Freud and Jung—as far as he was concerned, the portrayal in play after play of the tragic operations of "psychic fate" (as he termed it)¹ was motivated purely by personal intuition. According to Arthur and Barbara Gelb, who wrote a critical study of the playwright, O'Neill considered himself to be an "intuitively keen analytical psychologist" who "felt injured by the suggestion that he consciously drew on Freud's theories to help him convey 'truths of the emotional past of mankind'."² Writing to Bennett Clark, O'Neill quite definitely rejects Clark's contention that *Mourning Becomes Electra* was patterned a little too precisely after the contemporary findings in psychology :

I don't agree with your Freudian objection. Taken from my author's angle, I find fault with critics on exactly the same point—that they read too damn much Freud into stuff that could very well have been written exactly as is [sic] before psychoanalysis was ever heard of ... I think I know enough about men and women to have written *Mourning Becomes Electra* almost exactly as it is if I had never heard of Freud or Jung or the others. Authors were psychologists you know, and profound ones, before psychology was invented. And I am no deep student of psychoanalysis.

Yet immediately after this, in the same letter, he admits to some knowledge, at least, of the new theories :

As far as I can remember, of all the books written by Freud, Jung, etc., I have read only four and Jung is the only one of the lot who interests me. Some of his suggestions I find extraordinarily illuminating in the light of my own experience with hidden motives.³

There is similar ambiguity as to the extent of his familiarity with the concepts of depth psychology in a 1929 letter written to Martha

Carolyn Sparrow, a research student who had written to O'Neill for clarification on precisely this point :

There is no conscious use of psychoanalytic material in any of my plays. All of them could easily have been written by a dramatist who had never heard of the Freudian theory and was simply guided by an intuitive psychological insight into human beings and their life-impulsions that is as old as Greek drama. ... It was my dramatic instinct and my personal experience with human life that alone guided me ... I would say that what has influenced my plays the most is my knowledge of the drama of all time—particularly Greek tragedy—and not any books on psychology.

However, at the same time, he confessed to being "enough of a student of modern psychology to be fairly familiar with the Freudian implications inherent in the actions of some of my characters while I was portraying them"; though this is immediately qualified as being "always an after-thought". Further on in the same letter O'Neill finally refers to some of the books on psychology which he had actually read :

I have only read two books of Freud's, "Totem and Taboo" and "Beyond the Pleasure Principle". The book that interested me the most of all those of the Freudian school is Jung's "Psychology of the Unconscious" which I read many years ago.⁴

But it appears that O'Neill must have been familiar with at least a few more of the core texts of psychoanalysis, for a recent critic has written :

By 1925 O'Neill possessed not only Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, but also *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. And while working on *Lazarus* he discussed Freud's *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious* with Manuel Komroff (Gelb, p. 600) It is of course possible—but unlikely—that O'Neill never read *Group Psychology* and *Wit* and that he discussed the latter merely on the basis of what Komroff told him about it. O'Neill also possessed Kraft-Ebbing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (copy now at C. W. Post College, L. I.) published in 1922 and, apparently, Stekel's treatise on sexual aberrations, *Disguises of Love*, which he showed Malcolm Cowley in November 1923. He told Cowley that there were enough case histories in the book 'to furnish plots to all the playwrights who ever lived' ...⁵

It seems, then, that O'Neill had rather more extensive knowledge of the new psychological theories than he cared to allow. Americans

were, in any case, not unacquainted with Freud's thought. Dr A. A. Brill had introduced the clinical practice of psychoanalysis in the United States in 1908; and in 1909, Freud had lectured at Clark University in Massachusetts, where he had been accompanied by Jung, Sandor Ferenczi and Ernest Jones.⁶ This could certainly not be taken as convincing proof of O'Neill's knowledge of psychological theories except for the fact that such notions were definitely "in the air" in the circles in which O'Neill was then moving. From 1916 onwards he was associated with one of the most progressive "little theatre" groups in the United States — the Provincetown Players — and as W. D. Sievers has put it in *Freud on Broadway*, "the story of the psychological maturing of the American drama is closely interwoven with the history of the 'Art Theatre' or 'Little Theatre' which spearheaded the revolt against the hackneyed commercial theatre ..."⁷. In 1915 (the year before O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff* was produced at Provincetown) the Provincetown Players had put up *Suppressed Desires* by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook, a satire on the intriguing new fad of psychoanalysis. And in Greenwich Village, where O'Neill was a habitué from about 1915, "the intellectuals", says Sievers, "would rather 'psych' each other than eat. ...Susan Glaspell was to exclaim in despair, 'You could not by a bun without hearing of someone's complex!'"⁸

O'Neill also had personal contacts with at least three psychoanalysts, all of which have been recorded by the Gelbs. He saw Dr Smith Ely Jelliffe "sporadically between 1923 and 1925 — not to be analyzed but simply to 'talk things over'". In 1925, O'Neill "discussed analysis in general on several occasions" with a neighbour at Paget West, Dr Louis Bisch. At about the same time, O'Neill and his second wife Agnes were among the two hundred couples selected for interview by Dr G. V. Hamilton (whom O'Neill had met through Kenneth Macgowan, the theorist of the Provincetown group) for "a research program into problems of sexual adjustment in the marital relationship". Dr Hamilton (whose findings, published in 1929 under the title *What's Wrong with Marriage*, were acknowledged by Dr Alfred C. Kinsey as anticipating his own more famous report) referred to his sessions with O'Neill as "a psychoanalysis", although the period covered was only six

weeks. Macgowan⁷ gives an interesting account of the whole procedure :

During the analysis Hamilton had Gene lie on a black leather couch in traditional Freudian style. When it was over, Gene told me that he had no trouble understanding that he hated and loved his father, and that he was suffering from an Oedipus complex.

In the same year as the analysis with Dr Hamilton — that is, 1925 — the Gelbs quote O'Neill as making what is probably his most balanced self-assessment on this issue : "I respect Freud's work tremendously — but I am not an addict !"⁹

In an article entitled "Psychological Fate in *Mourning Becomes Electra*", Doris M. Alexander has shown that the delineation of psychological motives in that play is very close to the analyses and judgments set out in Dr Hamilton's study.¹⁰ Yet another such publication may have influenced O'Neill's thinking. In 1922 Dr Smith Ely Jelliffe brought out in book form a collection of articles originally written for medical journals, under the provocative title *Psycho-Analysis and the Drama*. There is no actual evidence of O'Neill's acquaintance with this book, but in view of his close association with Dr Jelliffe, a strong possibility that he may have known of it. What is pertinent for our purpose is the connection which Dr Jelliffe established between the rôles of the dramatist and the psychologist. The function of the drama, according to Dr Jelliffe, is to set forth the "psychical elements and factors in individual realistic situations where these forces of life are at work". By fostering in the spectator a sense of "the close relation to himself of the problems presented in the drama" the playwright performs a "psychotherapeutic service" — "... the mission of the drama is to apply healing ... This may occur through a tragic exposure of the problems and their results". As a corollary we have the significant claim that "the place of the artistic psychologist may well be claimed for the author".¹¹

Dr Jelliffe's book consists of analyses of eight contemporary plays and Tolstoy's *Redemption* from a psychoanalytic point of view. The discussions reveal somewhat simplified applications of two well-known psychological theories — Freud's 'Oedipus complex' and Jung's 'collective unconscious'. For instance, the Oedipus

complex is discerned as operating in *The Yellow Jacket*, while the heroine's problems in *The Eyes of Youth* are found to be the consequences of "anciently inherited impulses based on ancestral experiences in the past".¹³ A passage from the latter chapter seems to anticipate certain ideas operating in *Mourning Becomes Electra* :

... Since the child is already a sexual being, this love has a tendency to go out more positively toward a parent of the opposite sex. Therefore a certain fixation upon such a parent may manifest itself in later life, or, at least, it will color and determine later events and later object choice. ... The parent is often no more free than the child in this matter.¹³

The most successful drama, as far as Dr Jelliffe is concerned, is that in which "actual psychoses are set in a new and truer light".¹⁴ His final comment brings immediately to mind O'Neill's own pronouncements on the subject of a playwright's psychic intuition :

Indeed, the theater, presenting as it does the artist's intuitive knowledge of the unconscious which lies below the scattered phenomena which we are accustomed to call the mental life, affords oftentimes the surest entrance into the profound regions of the human psyche.¹⁵

This last statement from Dr Jelliffe's book is very close to the central thesis of Kenneth Macgowan's *The Theater of Tomorrow* (1921). This was, effectively speaking, the creed or manifesto of a new repertory company, The Greenwich Village Theatre, which was formed in 1924 under the direction of the 'Triumvirate' (as they were dubbed), comprising Macgowan, O'Neill and Robert Edmond Jones. Macgowan was of the opinion that the major flaw in the American theatre of their time was "realism", which he defined as "absorption with the ephemeral exterior of the time in which we live."¹⁶ Following the predilections of their mentor, the graecophile George Cram Cook (who spent the last years of his life till his death in 1923 in self-imposed exile in Greece, and who is said to have "regretted not having been born a Greek of the fourth century B.C."¹⁷), Macgowan felt that the only way "to get back from realism to reality" was, to begin with, a return to the spirit of ancient Greek drama :

The drama must make us recognize the thing that, since Greek days, we had forgotten – the eternal identity of you and me with the vast and unmanageable forces which have played through every atom of life since the beginning.¹⁸

Now Freud and Jung had, in their different ways, renewed man's contact with "instinct and intuition and in general the whole vast field of the unconscious mind of man", and, like Dr Jelliffe, it was through these theories that Macgowan discerned the surest means of bringing the drama back to what he identified as the ancient Greek preoccupation with the eternal and spiritual character of humanity :

Psychoanalysis, tracing back our thoughts and actions into fundamental impulses, has done more than any one factor to make us recover the sense of our unity with the dumb mysterious processes of nature. We now know through science what the Greeks and all primitive peoples knew through instinct. The task is to apply it to art, and in our case, to drama. It may be applied generally ; it may give us a drama utterly apart from anything we have now, nearer perhaps to the Greek than to any other in spirit, yet wholly new in mechanism and method... But whatever the form of the play, the content will have a spiritual quality that gives us this subliminal sense of age-old processes alive in us today.¹⁹

Macgowan's prescriptions for the ideal theatre of the future are admittedly somewhat imprecise, but one suspects that O'Neill would not have quarrelled with the ultimate recommendation in *The Theater of Tomorrow* :

Perhaps the simplest and surest statement that I should risk is this : It [the theatre] will attempt to transfer to dramatic art the illumination of those deep and vigorous and eternal processes of the human soul which the psychology of Freud and Jung has given us through study of the unconscious, striking to the heart of emotion and linking our commonest life today with the emanations of the primitive racial mind.²⁰

We see, then, that O'Neill had a wide range of opportunities to familiarise himself with the new concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian analytical psychology, and was, besides, aware of their potential in the theatre, especially for tragedy. Quite apart from the suggestions of Jelliffe and Macgowan, the two influences on his work which O'Neill openly acknowledged — those of Nietzsche and Strindberg — would also have inclined him towards a tragic exploration of the conflicts within the recesses of the human psyche. Moreover, it is surely significant that the three books of which O'Neill admitted definite knowledge in the letter to Miss Sparrow — Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* — either establish connections

with tragedy as a literary form, or else present an essentially tragic vision of the human condition. In *Totem and Taboo* Freud created a myth of his own — that of the Primal Father and the Brother Horde — to account for "the beginnings of so many things — of social organisations, of moral restrictions and of religion." Since the hypothetical slaying of "the violent Primal Father" is taken by Freud to be the prototype of all acts of ritual sacrifice, (which are interpreted by Freud as expiation for "the filial sense of guilt") he sees in this violent act also the initiation of Greek tragedy, which emerged out of ritual and dramatised renderings of "the sufferings of the divine goat, Dionysus". Later, according to Freud, the tragic hero took over the role of the Primal Father :

But why had the hero of tragedy to suffer ? and what was the meaning of his tragic guilt ? ... He had to suffer because he was the primal father, the Hero of the great prehistoric tragedy which was being re-enacted with a tendentious twist ...²¹

The other Freudian text, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, describes the presence in the human psyche of a death-wish that, with tragic consequences, wars against the "pleasure principle" or the natural human tendency to avoid pain. The death-wish is a universal phenomenon in that it may be observed, in more or less regulated manifestations, both in neurotics as well as in the clinically "normal". Following a discussion of the various kinds of death-instinct present in men, Freud concludes with language that strongly evokes, on the one hand, the terrors of the Greek "ate", and on the other, the fatalistic compulsions of Nemesis :

The 'repetition-compulsion' which psychoanalysis reveals in the transference phenomena with neurotics can also be observed in the life of normal persons. It here gives the impression of a pursuing fate, a daemonic trait in their destiny, and psycho-analysis has from the outset regarded such a life-history as in a large measure self-imposed and determined by infantile influences.....²²

The third book, Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, begins with a study of psychic trauma, or the "pathogenic" and "psychogenic" effects of traumatic experiences. Having discussed and rejected the two current dominant explanations for trauma — Freud's "sexual theory" and Adler's "will to power" — Jung introduces his own interpretation. To simplify drastically, he links psychic trauma

with his theory of the collective unconscious, seeing in traumatic experiences both a visionary dimension, as well as something very akin to the Freudian death-instinct :

... whoever identifies himself with the collective psyche, also reaches the treasure which the dragon guards, but against his will and to his own great injury, by thus allowing himself (mythologically speaking) to be devoured by the monster and merged with it.²³

All this is very close to what O'Neill chose to call "psychic fate", even though, when asked, for instance, about the Oedipal element in *Desire Under the Elms*, he had sardonically replied that it had "walked right in through my unconscious".²⁴ Whatever may be the ultimate truth of the matter, O'Neill's own thinking on the subject is remarkably similar to the ideas of Freud and Jung. In a comment on *The Hairy Ape* O'Neill wrote — "... the one subject for drama ... is man and his struggle with fate. This struggle used to be with the gods, but is now with himself ...".²⁵ Even more significantly, in a letter to A. H. Quinn, O'Neill virtually equated the traditional notion of a metaphysical fate external to man and supernaturally regulated, with the new psychological conception of destiny as internal, and as governed by hereditary traits on the one hand, and by inner psychic pressures on the other :

I'm always acutely conscious of the Force behind—Fate, God, our biological past creating our present, whatever one calls it—Mystery certainly ... And my profound conviction is that this is the only subject worth writing about and that it is possible—or can be—to develop a tragic expression in terms of transfigured modern values and symbols in the theatre²⁶

From *Strange Interlude* it would seem that Freudian symbols do not provide the solution for this new language of the theatre which O'Neill endeavoured to establish. In that play, one of the characters, Charley Marsden, exclaims ironically — "... a lot to account for, Herr Freud ! ... pah, what an easy cure-all ! ... sex the philosopher's stone ... 'O Oedipus, O my King ! The world is adopting you !'" But in *Dynamo*, written the following year, Reuben Light's quest to replace the dead god of religion with the new god of Science is objectified through Reuben's half-crazed transference upon the machine of what is essentially an Oedipal mother-fixation — "... a great, dark mother ! ... that's what the dynamo is ! ... that's

what life is! ... Oh Mother of life, my mother is dead, she has passed back into you." In *Desire Under the Elms*, the fate brooding over the house of Ephraim and Eben like some Aeschylean miasma is, once again, identified with the mother-figure—"Maw". And of *Mourning Becomes Electra* O'Neill wrote that his purpose was "to get modern psychological approximation of Greek sense of fate ... which an intelligent audience of today, possessed of no belief in gods or supernatural retribution, could accept and be moved by". The outcome is unarguably Oedipal. Orin Mannon reveals his inner compulsions when he says of Adam Brant — "If I had been he I would have done what he did! I would have loved her [Orin's mother Christine] as he loved her — and killed Father too — for her sake!". Indeed while most of O'Neill's plays, right up to *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, revolve around variations on the Oedipal theme, other plays illustrate his translation of Jungian concepts in terms of the drama. Especially in *The Dreamy Kid*, *The Emperor Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, the atavistic nature of the black American characters clearly points to their presentation in terms of a Jungian "collective unconscious" that reaches back into their African heritage. Finally, in the attempt to create a "new masked psychological drama"²⁷ in such plays as *The Hairy Ape*, *The Great God Brown*, as well as in the "mask-like look" of the Mannons in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, O'Neill reveals the impact, not only of the Greek theatrical ideal of Cook and Macgowan or of Gordon Craig's influential discussion on the theatrical use of masks in *The Theatre Advancing* (1919)²⁸, but also of his own reading of the Freudian division of the psyche into the conscious and subconscious planes. O'Neill's interpretation of this aspect of Freudian psychology occurs in his two treatises entitled *Memoranda on Masks* and *Dogma for the New Masked Drama*. In the latter work O'Neill wrote:

For what, at bottom, is the new psychological insight into human cause and effect but a study in masks, exercise in unmasking? ... one's outer life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself.²⁹

Another passage in the same text spells out O'Neill's dramatic strategy with greater clarity:

... the use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solution of the modern dramatist's problem as to how—with the greatest

possible dramatic clarity and economy of means—he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us ...⁸⁰

O'Neill's own assessment of his use of masks in *The Great God Brown* was that he had tried to "foreshadow the mystical patterns created by the duality of human character and the search for what lies hidden and beyond the words and actions of men and women".⁸¹ In this play "psychic fate" manifests itself through the inability of the characters to forge meaningful relationships, for as the hero Dion Anthony puts it, "we communicate in code — when neither has the other's key!". Interesting from the Freudian point of view is the fact that the one person in the play who can see through all appearances or masks is the prostitute Cybel, whom O'Neill himself had identified with an archetypal Mother-figure, "Cybele, the pagan Earth mother".⁸²

O'Neill's major plays thus represent a rich and varied quest to evolve theatrical means to do justice to some key concepts about human nature which were suggested by the revolutionary new theories of Freud and Jung. The work of these pioneers reinforced O'Neill's own penchant for psychological analysis as well as his tragic reading of life. And perhaps the most important contribution of these radical conceptions about the human psyche to the shaping of Eugene O'Neill as a tragic dramatist lay in their providing him with a focal point or a node, as it were, around which to realise his modern rendering of the ancient tragic nemesis, and so to evolve "a new language for the theatre"⁸³—the concept of "psychic fate".

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HEMINGWAY'S CHANGING WORLD-VIEW IN *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

SANJUKTA DAS GUPTA

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S remarkable novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls* was published in 1940, almost fourteen years after he made his debut as a novelist with the publication of *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926. *For Whom The Bell Tolls* should be regarded as a significant novel by every Hemingway scholar since it records Hemingway's changing philosophy of life. The novel undoubtedly reveals that its writer had matured a great deal since the days he wrote of a single man's courageous action and portrayed so meticulously the tragic plight of brave individuals in a ruthless universe as in *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *To Have and Have Not* as well as in the collections of short stories entitled *In Our Time*, *Men Without Women* and *Winner Take Nothing*.

Hemingway's initial attitude to life and the portrayal of a nihilistic universe is understandable, for this American expatriate in Paris began writing at a very crucial and tragic period of world history. The 1914-1918 war had demolished hopes and ideals and it remained a traumatic experience for all sensitive and intelligent young people of this period. The nightmare of the First World War and its aftermath were responsible in ushering in a new generation of writers such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Aldous Huxley, Dos Passos, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, e. e. cummings among others, who were peculiarly alienated from their times and traditions, rootless derelicts in search of new vestiges of belief that would reorganize their shattered integrity. So, "The Waste Land", *Point Counter Point*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Enormous Room*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *One Man's Initiation et al*, portray the pervasive sense of disillusionment and frustration of the post nineteen twenties.

In *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, however, the hitherto alienated Hemingway protagonist realizes the necessity of human solidarity in

a violent and tragic world. The isolated but brave protagonist learns that even the temporary relationships with his fellow brethren can provide a sustaining and rewarding experience. Of course, this theme of human solidarity which naturally gave his writing an enriching dimension was not introduced arbitrarily in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. Tentative approach to this theme was made in *To Have and Have Not*. This change occurred in Hemingway's nihilistic world view with his exposure to a second war, a civil war this time.

So, it was during the mid 1930's that the change in Hemingway's attitude came about. Deeply perturbed by the ensuing Spanish Civil War he became an ardent supporter of the Loyalists. He went over to Spain four times in order to witness and assess the situation for himself. To realize funds for the Spanish Republican force Hemingway also made a documentary film entitled *The Spanish Earth*. This was followed by the publication of *Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories*, a volume dedicated to the Spanish cause. It was while in Spain that he realized that one man alone against the world could achieve nothing. Therefore, the hero of his next novel, Harry Morgan in *To Have and Have Not* (1936), admits as he dies, "One man alone ain't got. No man alone now ... No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody chance."¹ It was not an easy lesson to learn, "It had taken him a long time to get it out and it had taken him all of his life to learn it."² This rudimentary feeling about the necessity of human solidarity in *To Have and Have Not* gains further dimension and is clearly defined in his next major novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. The title of the book derived from one of John Donne's sermons illustrates Hemingway's changing *weltanschauung*: "No man is an *Island*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; if a clod bee washed away by the *Sea*, *Europe* is the lesse, as well as if a *Promontorie* were, as well as if a *Mannor* of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; and therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*."³

It is apparent from the epigraph that the plane of reality Hemingway desired to represent underwent a subtle change from this point. Individual courage was still the source of human triumph, but the

individual realized that he was an inseparable part of all humanity. He could not exist or operate alone. Of the two levels in Hemingway's plane of reality, subjective and objective, this change in approach affects the subjective or perceptual level of reality in his novels. As always, the objective level of reality comprising death, disillusionment, fatigue and futility remains unchanged. The inner workings of the human mind undergo a transition, the external world retains its ruthless detachment.

Formerly, estrangement from society was the essential theme of Hemingway's fiction. This sense of alienation common to the young people of the 1920's is seen in Nick Adams' exploits in the Michigan woods, amongst the Indians and in the First World War. It is also seen in Frederic Henry and Catherine's denial of society and living as virtual recluses in the hills of Switzerland, in the matador's lonesome combat with the bull, and in Harry Morgan's lonely ethos, the desire to maintain independence in the midst of industrialized and mechanised mediocrity. In *For Whom The Bell Tolls* on the contrary, the author expresses an explicit desire to return to society. Even while in love Robert Jordan unlike Frederic Henry feels the necessity of returning to urban life, to Madrid, to the conversation at the Gaylords, to his friends and companions, to the journalists and other military comrades.

So, *For Whom The Bell Tolls* marks a turning point in Hemingway's idea of reality. And like Hemingway, the hero of *For Whom The Bell Tolls* finds the Spanish Civil War greatly instructive. Robert Jordan emphasises, "it is part of one's education. It will be quite an education when it is finished. You learn in this war if you listen. You most certainly did."⁴ Hemingway's own development was marked by his realization of the interdependence of human beings and the necessity of being a member of society. The desire to return to society is drawn with great care in the novel. Pablo, the erstwhile powerful guerilla leader has a peculiar "sadness" about him as he feels the corrosive solitude of being alone, "Having done such a thing there is a loneliness that cannot be borne."⁵ And yet, when with peculiar peasant shrewdness Pablo instantly apprehends disaster and disapproves of Robert Jordan's mission he is reprimanded by a fellow Spaniard in words that suggest the outline

of the theme of the novel: "Now we come for something of consummate importance and thee, with thy dwelling place to be undisturbed, puts thy foxhole before the interests of humanity. Before the interests of thy people."⁶

The novel opens with Robert Jordan, the American soldier in the Spanish Republican army lying flat on the brown, pine-needle floor of the forest. He is accompanied by Anselmo, an old Spanish guerilla, of remarkable courage and sensitivity. Jordan is a Spanish language instructor who had voluntarily joined the Spanish Republican force. He is on his way to a guerilla hideout in order to seek co-operation from the absconding guerillas so that they would help him blow a strategic bridge in the vicinity of their hide-out. Being under orders, Robert Jordan like Philip Rawlings of *The Spanish Earth* (1938) or like any other dedicated soldier for that matter, makes elaborate plans to blow the bridge. Yet, at the back of his mind Jordan has a queer feeling that the orders have gone wrong somewhere. All the same he obeys General Golz's orders like a maxim. The external reality of war and its resultant ethos, however erroneous, thus remain irrevocable and unquestioned. The individual is doomed to do and perish in such an impersonal set-up.

Time is a vital factor in the novel. As the story unfolds we are made aware of the limited time span in which all the action is to take place. Seventy hours, three nights and four days is the total time span of the novel. In this compressed time Robert Jordan's association with the Spanish guerillas, his love for Maria, his blowing of the bridge, the tragic end of the guerilla band of El Sordo, are portrayed with remarkable dynamism and power by the author. The sense of the lack of time is emphasised repeatedly from the moment Jordan falls in love with Maria. The moments of their togetherness are invested with a sense of permanence so that these moments transcend all chronological time and coalesce into the timeless moment, the eternal now. It is perhaps this transcendence and liberty from a time-bound universe that Hemingway describes as the fifth dimension in prose.

As a result, Robert Jordan's love for Maria has a peculiar tenderness offset by a sense of pathos since parting is inevitable. With the

hovering of the Fascist planes overhead, with the ring of the bullet sounds and the explosion of grenades in his ears as Sordo's band is wiped out, Robert Jordan tells his beloved, "I love thee as I love all that we have fought for, I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry. I love thee as I love all my comrades that have died. And many have died. Many. Many Thou canst not think how many. But I love thee as I love what I love most in the world and I love thee more."⁷ These lines exemplify the growing social awareness of the Hemingway protagonist. The objective reality of war and its corollaries, death and disillusionment, encroach upon the idyllic oasis of love. The subjective or perceptual level of experiences is indivisibly linked with the objective, experiential realities of life. Robert Jordan does not love Maria alone. He is emotionally attached to his lost comrades, to the sense of human dignity in jeopardy and to the cause of *laissez faire*. His little heaven of personal love simultaneously develops his affinity to all the other loves of his life. What distinguishes the love theme in *A Farewell to Arms* from the theme of love in *For Whom The Bell Tolls* is the fact that Frederic Henry's idyllic moments of togetherness with Catherine occur when he is miles away from the battlefield. In the latter, love flowers in the midst of destruction, the lover himself being simultaneously engaged in a strategic bridge-blowing project.

Apart from romantic love and time themes preyed upon by a sense of tragedy, the novel is also replete with socio-political implications. These implications form the backdrop which intensifies the romantic theme of the novel. The backdrop forms the objective or experiential reality described with such meticulous care in his novels. Though Robert Jordan joins the Loyalist force Hemingway indicates that both the Loyalists and the Fascists were human after all, despite their ideologies. Never before in the novels of Hemingway have we noticed a political background. This inclusion and yet the detachment from adhering to any party add a new dimension to his literary achievements. This is apparent from the descriptions of Loyalist and Fascist atrocities recounted by Pilar and Maria respectively. The essence of the novel lies in the fact that formerly individual courage was regarded as an isolated episode. In *For Whom The Bell Tolls* Hemingway has given the sense of courage

in a man a kind of profound universality. Though the overall impression is one of political detachment as noticed in the descriptions of Loyalist and Fascist violence there are also a few instances of propagandist vehemence as in the scathing words of Pilar when she defends a tubercular matador, "In a country where the bourgeoisie overeat so that their stomachs are all ruined and they cannot live without bicarbonate of soda and the poor are hungry from their birth till the day they die why wouldn't he be tubercular?"⁸

Despite the social significance of the novel Robert Jordan, who may be regarded as a maturer Frederic Henry, feels that now that he has experienced the war situation at first hand, he cannot possibly own allegiance to any political banner, "You're not a real Marxist and you know it. You believe in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness."⁹ Jordan does not expect any political recognition once the war is over. He simply wants to return to his previous job, that of teaching Spanish and desires to write a true book of what he had experienced in the war. There is no sense of glorious heroism in Hemingway's protagonists. They simply do what a man must do, when faced with certain predicaments in life. In Hemingway's code of ethics if a man fails to react with courage and fortitude when faced with adverse circumstances he fails to be man enough and therefore, can never aspire to be an ideal Hemingway protagonist. Jordan reflects, "He would abandon a hero's or a martyr's end gladly. He did not want to make a Thermopylae, nor be Horatius at any bridge, nor be the Dutch boy with his finger in that dyke. No. He would like to spend sometime with Maria. That was the simplest expression of it. He would like to spend a long, long time with her."¹⁰ Jordan's desire to spend some time with Maria recalls Frederic Henry's thoughts after he had deserted the war front. "I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine."¹¹

Robert Jordan confesses elsewhere that whenever he was with the regiment he felt overwhelmingly that he was taking part in a crusade: "It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and *in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. It was something that you had never*

known before but that you had experienced now, and you gave such importance to it and the reasons for it that your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty. But the best thing was that there was something you could do about this feeling and this necessity too. You could fight."¹³ However, despite his crusading fervour Robert Jordan is of opinion that time is out of joint in the world of the mid 1930's: "I would not wish to bring either a son or a daughter into this world as this world is."¹⁴ Jordan's morbid statement intensifies the tragic atmosphere of the novel: "In contrast with the mood of the earlier novels, however, the essential mood of the book is tragic. The characters are caught in a box from which there is no exit except through the inevitable violent catastrophe."¹⁴

This awareness of inevitable tragic doom invests the perceptual level of reality with a pathetic urgency and nervousness as the experiential reality symbolised by death, destruction and irrevocable military orders closes in. Thus the two levels in Hemingway's plane of reality seem to be always at war. There are quite a number of themes running through the entire fabric of the novel. They are primarily time, love, death, life, war and politics. The first four are vital while the last two provide the backdrop where time, love, death and life themes are enacted. So, with full consciousness that the bridge-blowing project has become useless, Robert Jordan continues with his duty. The orders made no allowance for changed circumstances. Jordan is fully aware that in such a project, death is inevitable. "If one must die he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate it."¹⁵ Jordan's idea of death is not unlike that of the dying Catherine's in *A Farewell to Arms* "I'm not afraid. I just hate it."¹⁶

The perceptual level of reality is heightened in the novel with Jordan's growing sense of companionship with the Spanish guerillas Primitivo, Fernando, Andres, Anselmo, El Sordo, Pablo and his remarkable wife Pilar. Even in that short period the sensitive Robert Jordan recognizes the individual temperaments of each of his comrades. He realizes that the gipsy Agustin is extremely frivolous and unreliable; that Primitivo has more heart than head as observed

during his nervous emotionalism when El Sordo's band is attacked by Fascist planes; that Pablo, the erstwhile guerilla leader suffers from war fatigue; that Anselmo, the seventy year old hunter turned guerilla, can be a trusted friend and moral companion; that Pilar is a tremendous source of energy and courage to the guerillas. Jordan realizes that each of his comrades has certain limitations but together they are a force to reckon with, and this awareness is the essential purpose of the novel—the recognition of human solidarity. When Anselmo—Jordan's most trusted friend—dies while blowing the bridge, Jordan is deeply moved. So, during the seventy hours he spends with his Spanish friends, he feels he has learned a great deal about other fellow human beings and about life itself. He has also succeeded in fulfilling his mission. He has blown the bridge, the project which has brought him to these great people.

Mission accomplished, en route to escape, Jordan is seriously wounded in the left leg. With great reluctance his friends and his beloved Maria are compelled to leave him behind. Robert Jordan reassures the bitterly weeping Maria that he will be with her wherever she goes. At last she leaves, along with the others. So "they were all gone now and he was alone with his back against the tree."¹⁷ Left alone, Robert Jordan thinks, "Each one does what he can. You can do nothing for yourself *but perhaps you can do something for another.*"¹⁸ And as the pain from his smashed leg increases, he thinks, "Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you."¹⁹ The novel therefore indicates the change in Hemingway's philosophy of life and his consequent approach to reality. He is no longer content with reality manifested in an isolated act of human courage, he now recognizes reality that is based on human solidarity.

A recent Hemingway critic, Wirt Williams, states: "*For Whom The Bell Tolls* may be the most visible single movement in Hemingway's development as a tragic writer: it is the first novel in which the protagonist wins an unambiguous, spiritual triumph in his terminal catastrophe by a specific act of volition."²⁰ Simultaneously, apart from this sense of spiritual triumph the novel also expresses an awareness of the individual's link with the human community. "This is the first occasion that obligation to the human community has

been developed into an important theme in a Hemingway novel, though it has been dimly foreshadowed in *To Have and Have Not*. Its corollary is the view that all men share a common unity and identity, whatever their transient differences."²¹

With the pain in his limb becoming excruciating every minute Jordan decides to be of service to his comrades for the last time. He resolves to perish in the attempt to kill as many of the cavalry as possible who would surely try to follow the trail of Pablo and his band. As the cavalry approaches, in complete silence, ensconced in the dark green vault formed by the pine trees Jordan takes his final look at the world as it appeared at that moment. At this moment of final leave-taking Robert Jordan feels once again his absolute union with the world. "In the spectacle of Death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocableness of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of the vastness, the depth, the inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which, as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow."²²

Despite certain limitations mostly involving a rather prolix narrative style, *For Whom The Bell Tolls* may thus be treated as a representative novel, giving us a clear idea about Hemingway's changing approach to reality. Like *A Farewell to Arms*, this Spanish novel too is a splendid affirmation of human values in full glory hounded by the impersonal forces of death and destruction. Unlike his previous works where an individual triumphed momentarily over his intimidating circumstances, in *For Whom The Bell Tolls* individual triumph is treated as part of the triumph of the whole human race. Aldridge sums up the achievements and limitations of the novel with insight:

For the first time in Hemingway history his people attach no importance to themselves as individuals. For the first time they affirm life by collective action and collective sacrifice. But their gain in social maturity is achieved at the expense of Hemingway's dramatic formula, his perfected technique conceived in negation and based on the principle of individual selfishness, for bringing to a climax and resolving in art, the basic human failure of his time.²³

So, the alienated, young American expatriate of the 1920's, the unmistakable member of the "lost generation" seems to have grown out of the sense of identity crisis with the writing of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. For Ernest Hemingway who wrote of the inescapable, irremediable gloom that overshadowed post-war Europe in *The Sun Also Rises* and accentuated the impression further by writing *A Farewell to Arms*, described as one of fiction's purest tragedies, it was indeed a formidable step. The endeavour to identify the individual with mankind proves conclusively that Hemingway was no longer content with the image of the courageous, lonely combatant. The identification with and recognition of mankind, point out the maturity of the author's approach, as such an approach transcends the restricted domains of experience of a single individual and simultaneously lays emphasis on the sustaining virtues of human solidarity.

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‘PURE PERCEPTION’ (PATER) AND
‘IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE’ (F. H. BRADLEY) : A NOTE

SOUMYAJIT SAMANTA

PATER'S aesthetic doctrine has more than just superficial resemblance with Bradley's notion of 'immediate experience'. In fact, Pater's concept of immediacy of the moment, gaining significance from the act of perception by the artist questing out towards a unique experience can be explained by the idea of pure 'feeling', adumbrated in Bradley's notion of 'immediate experience'. Both Pater and Bradley agree that 'feeling' (Bradley) and 'pure perception' (Pater) are incipient points in the gradual process of epistemological thinking. The process of knowing in both of them is grounded on an empirical reality (an intense physical moment) which has important philosophical and aesthetic implications. When Bradley considers feeling in the sense of the immediate unity of a finite psychical centre he refers to that fused-like condition before distinctions and relations have developed and where as yet neither any subject nor object exists. And it means, in the second place, anything which is present at any stage of mental life, in so far as that is only present and simply is.

It is difficult, however, to arrive at any definite conception regarding 'immediate experience'. Bradley hopes to arrive at it by inference. This is so because it is only in immediate experience that the knower and the known are one. Whenever we initiate a process of realisation and try to *know*, this unity between knowledge and object is broken. It is paradoxical that whenever we try to come to terms with our immediate experience we are forced to describe it either as an adjective of a subject or the adjective of an object, either as *my* experience, or as the experienced *world*. If we say that the *world* is my experience or that experience is made of *that*, of just what it appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not, we substitute meanings which hold good

only *within* experience. We could, however, speak of *my* experience only in a most provisional manner because the *I* is a construction out of experience, an abstraction from it. Equally the elements out of which we construct a world of appearance like colour, texture, substance and so on are ideal constructions from experience; as ideal as atoms. An *elan vital* or 'flux' is equally an abstraction from experience, for it is only in moving away from immediate experience that we are aware of such a process.¹

Bradley insists that the *real* must be felt. To find reality we must feel. But we are forbidden to identify reality with feeling, either *my* feeling, or collective feeling, or an *impersonal* current of feeling. Bradley says that feeling is to be taken in two senses. It refers to the state of the soul in its totality, undifferentiated into any of the preceding special aspects. Again, it might refer to any particular state so far as internally that has undistinguished unity. Thus he makes the logically lowest level of human thought (where there is nothing except feeling) an *ultimate fact* and the basis of his speculative enquiry. Feeling provides the foundation on which the more articulated forms of knowledge are based and it also becomes in itself an instance of a non-relational immediate felt unity leading us to the Absolute.

Reality for Bradley can be said to be synonymous with a *single* experience, anterior to relations and all-inclusive. A fact or our perception of fact is always *directly* felt and experienced. No amount of analysis should break up an immediate experience into a logic of relations between its felt contents. According to him *absolute reality* is even manifested in *finite centres* and both can be taken as united in one experience. And he admits that there is something inexplicable in the non-relational whole of feeling—a unique experience which for the time being defies rationalisation of the process.

We may now consider Pater's emphasis on the finite world in his *Renaissance*. In the conclusion especially, Pater asserts the reality of our physical life and explains that our physical life is a perpetual motion of matter and natural elements around us. Man is made up of elements which have their origin in nature and our intense,

flamelike life is the product of forces uniting and separating from moment to moment. In the *Renaissance* Pater recognises the subjectivity of knowledge which is the truth of philosophy, accepts the notion of eventual dissolution which is the lesson of science, and seeks compensation in the intensity of consciousness.³ In his quest for an intensity of experience he makes philosophy an agent in the process of perceiving. And in this sense the true meaning underlying Novalis's assertion quoted in the Conclusion to *The Renaissance* does not lie in the idea that philosophy should vivify by sharpening the eye but that it should vivify by creating awareness of the *unifying principle of consciousness in oneself and in all living things*.⁵ Such an awareness comes during the moment of 'pure perception' in Pater's aesthetics.

This moment of 'pure perception' signals a flow of feeling between the artist and the world and creates an awareness of the unifying principle of consciousness in the artist. Such a momentary empathy comes on in an outburst of feeling — a moment of purely physical sensation where all other feelings are non-existent except that of simple joy. This supreme moment of an individual's communion with the universal spirit is the ultimate aim in the life of an aesthete for whom experience is an end in itself. Nature is *instinct with life* and every moment contributes to the achievement of perfection in some form or other. Sometimes we are struck with the subtlety of some colour in nature and at other moments we grasp at some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement.⁴

Now the artist is the best person to reach out towards such a dissolving experience and isolate the moment of insight. He must burn constantly with a *hard, gem-like flame*. Amid the flux of life he can only liberate himself from the shackles of the world by ensuring his total participation in the moment through some passionate experience or rare wisdom or some aesthetic activity. In Pater the artist is always in search after the single moment, evanescent and constantly eluding the grasp as it were. The uniqueness of the artist lies in his quest for a totality of experience — a totality defined by the singularity and sharpness of the impression and at the same time by its inclusiveness, enriched by the memory of past moments of insight.

The moment of 'pure perception' has philosophical implications for Pater : it is the synthesis enacted between the individual and the Geist — a synthesis described variously. It is sometimes termed as in Wordsworth's case, a moment of *heavenly alchemy* where the poet is shown as celebrating the fitness of things : a subtle blending of the individual mind with the external world. Wordsworth's perception of a life in natural objects comes from his 'impassioned contemplation' of the universal soul. To him every natural object seems to possess a moral or spiritual life and thereby becomes capable of communing with man.

'Pure perception', then, can be likened to Bradley's notion of 'immediate experience' because in both the difference between the two factors in experience is incorporated within a higher unity. In the beginning there is only the thing that is presented ; *it is* and *is felt* or rather is felt simply. In fact, there is no multiplicity of feelings like fear or hope or memory or imagination or even thought or will. There is no perception either of difference or likeness. There is only one single feeling.

In Pater the aesthetic activity is based on pure feeling and perception which envisages the obliteration of any distinction between matter and form in art. In *The Renaissance* for instance, Pater says that in its primary aspect a great picture imaginatively presents before us an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the wall or floor. The picture becomes in reality a space of such fallen light. The medium harmonises so perfectly with the object that the material no longer strikes the intellect, only ; nor the form, the eye or ear only ; but form and matter in their union present one single effect to the 'imaginative reason'. In Leonardo da Vinci's portraits Pater observes the moment of fusion in the dissolving of sense and idea in the contour of the young man's hair, the poise of the slave's arm above his head, and in the delicate tracing of the curve of a child's head. It is interesting to note that Leonardo will never work till the happy moment of insight comes and at that instant the alchemy is complete. The idea is given definite shape and substance by the use of colour and imagery, and the painting pleases the eye while it satisfies the soul. Again, the abstract feeling of pity is concretized in Michelangelo's picture of the

Virgin Mother expressing her sorrow over the dead body of Christ. Another instance may be found in the Madonnas of Botticelli, who are expressive of a certain wistfulness, a feeling of loveliness and energy but saddened always by the shadow upon them of the heavenly things from which they shrink.

In Pater, however, the artist is not shut up in solipsism. Both the state of 'pure perception' and creation envisage a state of self-transcendence. This self-dissolving experience is a perfect aesthetic state. The individual escapes the clutches of a morbid self-centredness and abandons himself to the vast processes in nature and history. In the artefact the artist achieves a dissolution of personality: his search is for an objective correlative to escape the centripetal force which leads him into his personal self again.

In both Pater and Bradley 'immediate experience' or 'pure perception' forms the basis of cognition, but they do not deny the significance of process or claim that 'immediate experience' (or 'pure perception') alone is real. In one sense Bradley agrees that we can never break out and pass beyond feeling. Everything real must be felt. But in a different sense our felt content of experience is developed in such a manner that it passes beyond and contradicts the form of feeling or mere immediacy. And the full nature of the Real is, or ought to be found, in this ideal content. We must embrace a higher notion of Reality which both includes and transcends the sphere of immediate feeling.

In both Bradley and Pater the existential nature of the individual makes a curious starting point because although the epistemological process originates in him, the process involves the gradual merging of his identity within the totality of creative activity. In the artifact the artist achieves a dissolution of personality because his soul passes out of himself as it were and coexists or harmonises with a physical medium to produce a synthesis — a synthesis where neither spirit nor sense reigns supreme. The art-object is infused with a message, a spirit, and yet has a palpable empirical reality. Similarly in the state of 'pure perception' the existential movement reaches out towards self-transcendence and when we take part in the vivid reality of immediate experience we are never limited

by a feeling of discreteness. It is only later that we realise the distinctness of our individual destiny.

In a sense this feeling of discreteness or differentiation is an essential aspect of reality. If subject and object can separate then the integral unity manifested in the moment of 'pure perception' cannot be complete and self-sufficient. Reality can never be an ideal construct since it cannot be an accumulation of experience within a moment of static perception. The very concept of reality has a notion of dynamism within it and if the moment of unity in an aesthetic experience is followed by disunity, it is evident that the moment of perception contains within it the very elements of disintegration. Take for instance the kind of feelings which pass before the mind of an observer standing before a picture; when we stand before a beautiful painting we are sometimes carried away by our feeling. Now this feeling is an entirety, a whole which is not, in a sense, *our* feeling since the painting, which is an object beyond us and independent of our being is quite as truly a part of our consciousness or our soul. In fact, both object and subject, the painting and the beholder are separate, but they enter into a relation which transcends their discrete identities. But if this absoluteness or whole of feeling were complete and satisfactory it would not expand into object and subject with feelings about the object.

Actually the genesis of consciousness lies in this expansion of a unit of feeling into separate identities. Awareness is inimical to this feeling of unity. The paradox, however, lies in the fact that for ourselves to be aware of that thing called 'feeling' we must needs be conscious. But so far as feeling becomes conscious, it ceases to be merely feeling. To review the entire matter once again, the history of the world requires both the history of my experience and also the existence of much which falls outside of itself. Thus both Bradley and Pater insist on the essential synthesis of subject and object in the moment of 'pure perception' or 'immediate experience', but in spite of their similarity of approach they diverge on an important issue, namely, the manner in which the individual transcends his own solipsism. For Pater the dissolution of personality both within the context of 'pure perception' and creative activity envisages perfect aesthetic states. And although everything

real ought to be felt, it is also true that the artist-mind plays a vital role in synthesising matter and form in his creation. Pure feeling and creation might seem discrete states but they become one in the moment of imaginative insight. In Pater, therefore, the moment of 'pure perception' acquires a special significance when it is placed in the light of creative activity.

In Bradley, on the other hand, the objective world has a vital role in the gradual dissolution of the individual. He stresses the fact that in any analysis of experience we ought to remember that experience demands reference to something real which lies outside of *that* experience. This is so because in spite of feeling having a substantial 'content', its content is not consistent within itself—Bradley thinks that finite content is irreconcilable with the immediacy of its existence. This is due to the finite content being determined by external agency, which touches and penetrates as it were, its very essence. In this any external agency helps an object to transcend itself. Thus Bradley detects a discordant note between the *whatness* of all feeling and its *thatness*. Hence he terms the '*whatness*' of all feeling an *appearance* and insists that it can never be real. This unreality of the *whatness* of feeling is emphasised by the hard fact of change. Bradley concludes that in this manner both from within and from without, feeling is compelled to pass off into the *relational consciousness*.

Both Pater and Bradley reach the assumption that knowledge is an organic whole of elements distinguishable but not separable from each other, and that it is a unity which at once creates and overcomes the distinction of subject and object. For Bradley the point of transcendence wherein the individual merges himself in a higher totality lies not only in his momentary perception of unity but also in his identification with the ceaseless processes of change in nature. For Bradley reality becomes a process. Thus *appearance* becomes a ceaseless process of disappearing and it is for our own good that we enter into a direct relation with any portion of that *continuous content*. For Pater it is the artist who brings about a unified notion of experience when he imparts a form to this world of ceaseless change or *continuous content*. It is by his creative activity that he helps to crystallize into fact the idea that Reality is a Single and a unified whole of experience.

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THE DEBATE ON LEARNING IN *PARADISE REGAINED*

AMLAN DAS GUPTA

I

CHRIST'S rejection of classical learning in the fourth book of *Paradise Regained* constitutes a difficulty over which Milton criticism habitually flounders. What one says about it is liable to be either too much or too little. The present essay is less an effort in explanation than an attempt to suggest that the work contains tensions that are ultimately unresolved ; that whatever we may seize on as the "meaning" of the work exists in the process of being redefined and reshaped within the work itself.

In its endeavour to examine the relationship of the temptation of learning to the whole work, this essay relates it to the discussion of "natural philosophy" in St Augustine's "magnum opus et arduum", the *City of God*. The question of Augustine's influence on Milton is a large and important one, and the present study examines only one aspect of it. No complete study of this influence seems to have been made, and indeed, the first book-length work on the subject, Peter A. Fiore's *Milton and Augustine*,¹ has been published comparatively recently. Fiore examines only *Paradise Lost* ; other aspects of this relationship have, however, been examined by critics in the course of more general surveys, notably by C. S. Lewis,² Louis Martz,³ and Irene Samuel.⁴ The comparison, I would like to argue, is an important one, and the study of the way Milton seems to have been influenced by the *City of God*, and how he assimilated these influences enhances our understanding and appreciation of *Paradise Regained*. This fact is attested to by the persistence with which scholars and critics, while discussing the poem, have commented on the closeness of Milton's thought to Augustine's discussion of related ideas in the *City of God*.⁵ Walter MacKellar's Variorum Commentary on the

poem affords a simple illustration of this point: his annotations often link together Augustine and Milton and the references to the *City of God* outnumber those to any other work by Augustine by far.

Yet what sort of comparison, beyond the purely local and incidental, one might ask, could be made between Milton's brief and ascetic poem about temptation and rejection, his "prompted song" that eschewed all traditional sources of inspiration and claimed direct revelation from the heavenly muse, and Augustine's massive and encyclopaedic work, with its sweeping overview of history? Milton's sources were the accounts of Christ's temptation in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and though Milton adds to the Biblical account, *Paradise Regained*, no less than *Christian Doctrine*, upholds the primacy of Scriptural authority. Neither does Augustine, in the *City of God*, directly discuss the temptation of Christ.

The point of the comparison, as I hope the ensuing discussion will make clear, lies in the concern that the two works show for similar issues, in their treatment of similar themes. Milton boldly interprets the simple Biblical story; Christ regains paradise by asserting spiritual values, by rejecting worldly action, and the various temptations that Satan holds forth. *Paradise Regained* and the *City of God* are equally rooted in social and political history, the *saeculum*; both address themselves to the question of how the *saeculum* is related to God's kingdom. Both Augustine and Milton reject miraculous and millenarian solutions to historical problems, in order to underline the importance of the human role in this process of transformation, and put forward an ideal of personal reform. Paradoxically, human action is defined in terms of abstaining, of waiting upon God's will: in the process both Milton and Augustine reject the splendours of the world; military glory and power; earthly kingdoms; oracular wisdom and pagan learning.

II

After Christ's rejection of earthly kingdoms, Satan returns to the assault by offering him intellectual power; "Be famous then / By wisdom" says the tempter (IV/221-2). He sings his sweetest song of

temptation, and surely it has proved the hardest to refuse, for few readers have been pleased with Christ's answer. There have been attempts to explain it away, to somehow rationalize this discordant view. The belief that this speech indicates the fact that Milton, in his later years, came to a complete distrust of intellectual effort is also widespread. Some critics, notably Irene Samuel,⁸ have offered arguments for the essential consistency of the views expressed in *Paradise Regained* with ideals of learning that Milton seems to have held, substantially unchanged, throughout his life.

The temptations of Parthia, Rome and Athens are clearly presented in ascending order. This is emphasised by Satan's mode of presentation ; he seems to grant or accept Christ's rejection and his criticism of both the temptations of Parthia and Rome. After the comparative crudity of the appeal of Parthian military power, Satan offers Rome as a superior alternative. Rome's "wide domain" he says, Christ may "justly ... prefer / Before the Parthian" (IV/81-5). Athens lies even higher in the scale of Satan's presentation. "Therefore let pass, as they are transitory, / The kingdoms of this world" (IV/209-10) he says now ; rather, he advises Christ, "let extend thy mind o'er all the world, / In knowledge" (IV/223-4). As Rome is the symbol of the civilised world, its political and social institutions, Athens represents learning, philosophy and literature :

Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits (IV/240-1)

This identification is made by St Augustine as well. In the important eighteenth book of the *City of God*, where he traces the history of the "city of the earth" in all its ramifications, he refers to Athens as "that great city, the mother or nurse of liberal studies and of so many great philosophers, the greatest glory and renown of Greece ..." (18/9). Augustine also feels that the unrivalled pre-eminence of Athens was more a matter of intellectual prestige than of actual political power. Quoting Sallust, he says that Athens' prestige was due largely to the "writers of remarkable genius" who "emerged in that city" (18/2). Augustine, in this chapter, has in mind Assyria and Rome as the two great empires of the world. Though the "city of the earth", says Augustine, has been divided into

numerous kingdoms, two of them, Rome and Assyria stand out, in a pattern of contrast, historical as well as geographic. All other kingdoms and kings, says Augustine "I should describe as something like appendages of those empires". Satan too presents worldly power and magnificence as summed up in Parthian and Roman kingdoms. "The rest are barbarous ... / Shared among petty kings" (IV/86-7).⁷ The glory of Athens, on the other hand, says Augustine, was more a question of intellectual wealth. It won no small glory from its literature and philosophers "because such pursuits flourished there in a pre-eminent degree". It is the entirety of this intellectual achievement that Satan offers Christ in the temptation of Athens.

This temptation, like the others, is couched in terms of power : "as thy empire must extend, / So let extend thy mind o'er all the world" (IV/222-3). Satan argues that Christ needs to know what the Gentiles "know, and write, and teach" in order to confute pagan learning itself : "How wilt thou reason with them, how refute / Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes ?" (IV/233-4). Initially at least, pagan learning is offered as a means of combating the enemy with its own weapons : "Error by his own arms is best evinced" (IV/235). Satan does not, as it is often thought, offer classical learning as an 'absolute end, but rather as a way of supplementing Christ's knowledge of the Prophets and the Laws.

All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch or what the prophets wrote,
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach (IV/225-7)

What Satan does insinuate is that the knowledge gained by following "nature's light" is a viable alternative, or at any rate, it should supplement that which the Scriptures reveal.

The beauty and power of the description of Athens all too often makes one forget Satan's initial qualifications. In sharp contrast to the splendour of the description of Rome, Athens is presented as an ideal of purity and simplicity : "a city ... / Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil" (IV/238-9). The celebrated architectural splendours of Greece are hardly present ; the stress is rather on "natural" surroundings, as opposed to the "turrets and terraces, and

glittering spires" (IV/54) of Rome. Significantly too, the description emphasises sounds, rather than sights: the nightingale singing in the olive-grove, the murmur of bees in the hills of Hymettus, the whisper of the stream Ilissus. This subtly reinforces what Christ will "hear" there: philosophical disquisitions, poetry, tragic speeches, eloquent oratory. Satan associates natural purity and simplicity with the attributes of the "life contemplative" that he offers Christ.

The theme of power, however, recurs again and again. It is not necessarily political or military any longer. Satan offers "the secret power / Of harmony in tones and numbers" (IV/254-5); but again, the eloquent orators "wielded at will that fierce democracy" (IV/269). Similarly, Aristotle's Lyceum is presented as the academy of one "who bred / Great Alexander to subdue the world" (IV/251-2). Satan offers Christ what Renaissance humanists had valued most and what had fired their dream of wisdom; Greek epic and tragic poetry, classical oratory and rhetoric, and the various traditions of Greek philosophy. Satan uses Christ's earlier example, Socrates, who is presented here too with subtle suggestions of frugality and perfect wisdom. Satan points to his "low-roofed house" in conjunction with his fame as the wisest of men. It is important to note that he presents Greek learning as a uniform body of "rules" with the suggestion that they will make Christ more fit to rule his future empire: "These rules will render thee a king complete / Within thyself, much more with empire joined" (IV/283-4). Satan's claim that an acceptance of his offer will render Christ "a king complete / Within himself" seems to be aimed at the earlier description of self-control, of ruling within one's self, advanced in Bk II. MacKellar observes, however, that Satan, with habitual sophistry, confuses Christ's ideal of self-control with a Stoic conception of self-sufficiency, and Christ's long denunciation of Stoic philosophy rejects this idea entirely.⁸

Christ's rejection of Satan's offers is sometimes thought of as a dismissal of all pagan, indeed secular,⁹ intellectual effort, but on consideration it seems to operate in a rather complex way. Indeed, as I would like to suggest, there are certain tensions in the speech which make it difficult to interpret simply in one way

or another ; this difficulty is accented when one takes into account other aspects of the poem's reaction to classicism. I shall be looking at some of these complicating factors later in this essay.

It is possible, however, to indicate one aspect of this difficulty at this point. Irene Samuel¹⁰ has argued persuasively for regarding Christ's speech as being in harmony with an attitude towards learning that Milton had throughout his life. She finds Christ's placing of the "songs of Sion" and divine guidance above knowledge derived from the classics, and his belief in the "adequacy of the human spirit, with or without particular books, in the quest for all knowledge essential to the good life"¹¹ in consonance with Milton's early commendation of the "plaine unlearned man that lives well by that light which he has" (*Yale*, 1, p. 720). Carey however points out rightly that Samuel's argument applies better to Christ's indication that he already knows what Satan purports to offer and counter-position of the doctrines of Greek philosophy and "light from above" (II/286-90), rather than to either the specific condemnation of Greek philosophy as being false, or the scathing criticism of Greek poetry. On the other hand, as Carey observes, there is also in *Paradise Regained*, a tendency, especially "in Bk ii, to retain an ethical system drawn largely from classical and Renaissance thought, while asserting the all-sufficiency of Scripture".¹²

This point is attested to by Christ's citation of examples of Roman heroism and his pairing of Socrates and Job.¹³ For Augustine these examples prove no difficulty : Quintius, Fabricius and Regulus are cited as examples of virtue, but in a very qualified sense. The feeling that Christians should not only try to emulate them but to surpass them is strong : if Romans could make such sacrifices for their earthly ideal of glory, how much more should Christians strive to ? (5/18). Two motives, says Augustine, drove the Romans to their wonderful achievements : liberty and the passion for human praise. Christians on the other hand are motivated by the ideal of "true liberty", that which frees one from the dominion of death, and the idea of advancing God's glory ; they should consequently strive towards greater ends (loc. cit). Milton's presentation however never makes this distinction clearly ; the point remains

implicit and Roman heroism seems to be presented simply as examples of excellence

canst thou not remember
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus ?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches though offered from the hands of kings. (II/445-9)

The examples of Socrates and Scipio strengthen the impression that Christ accepts pagan moral virtue, and I feel that this should be taken into account in our reading of Christ's rejection of pagan philosophy and literature.

The tone of the rejection, more than anything else, leaves little room for conciliatory views. Initially, though, the distinction seems temperate enough. Christ indicates that he already knows what Satan offers. What he sets above it is "light from above", divine guidance, which alone can make men sufficient. Like the inward oracle which replaces Satan's oracular wisdom, like the "saving doctrine" which rebuts the argument of worldly power and magnificence, the argument of intellectual power is answered by an assertion that one who receives

Light from above, from the fountain of light,
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true ; (IV/289-90)

But no measure of truth is granted to Greek philosophy at all :

these are false, or little else but dreams,
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm. (IV/291-2)

There seems however to be varying degrees of emphasis in the criticism of the various schools. Socrates, the "wisest of them all" merely testifies to the impossibility of gaining truth : he "professed/ To know this only, that he nothing knew" (IV/293-4). Even Plato, who is criticised for being more a poet than a philosopher, does not really bear the brunt of Christ's criticism. MacKellar points out that Plato is not criticised for flaws in his doctrines ; the charge is reminiscent of the Renaissance idea that Plato, though he excluded poets from his ideal republic, was himself something of a poet.¹⁴ Three more schools are briefly mentioned and dismissed : the

Sceptics ; the Artistotelians, who in Christ's opinion tie up virtue with bodily health and material possessions ; there is also a rather prejudiced aside at the Epicureans.

The rejection of Stoic philosophy is much more elaborate. Christ seems to be especially concerned with Satan's presentation of classical learning as making one self-sufficient, and locates this doctrine in Stoic philosophy.¹⁸ He bluntly equates the Stoic conception of virtue with pride, seeing it as an attempt to arrogate man over human contexts, as a free agent, independent of divine control. The Stoic, claiming to be "Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing, / Equal to God" (IV / 302-3) shows himself to be both arrogant and ignorant. Being ignorant both of God and himself, he cannot teach anything worthwhile, and his speculations lack basis in truth. On the other hand Stoics

to themselves

All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. (IV/314-8)

Mere book learning, says Christ, echoing a sentiment that recurs in Puritan literature, is useless ; much study, as it is said in Ecclesiastes, is a weariness of the flesh. Reading without bringing "A spirit and judgement equal or superior" (IV / 324) is a kind of basic irresponsibility, when a man remains

Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge ;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore. (IV/327-30).

Neither does classical literature attract Christ. He sooner finds "solace" in sacred songs and poems in his own language. It is interesting to note that Christ's defence of Hebrew poetry indicates a poetic by which classical literature is judged and found wanting. on the one hand, Christ commends the poetry of the Scriptures for its technical skill ; "our psalms with artful terms inscribed" (IV/335). In the *Reason of Church Government* Milton had written that songs to be found in the Laws and the Prophets excelled "all the kinds of Lyrick poesy" not only through their

"divine argument" but in the "very critical art of composition" (*Yale* 1, p. 816). Endorsing the common patristic belief that Greek learning was derived from the Hebrew, Christ finds that in imitating their models, classical literature has debased them. "In representing the gods as vicious the Greek poets have 'Ill imitated' 'Sion's songs' in which God is ever the God of righteousness".¹⁶ In judging Greek poetry as "Ill imitated (339) ... Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight" (395), Christ is in fact using a doctrine that Renaissance literary theorists derived from a conflation of Aristotle and Horace.¹⁷ The idea that poetry imitated in order to teach and delight lay at the basis of Renaissance literary criticism, and critics professed to derive it from classical antiquity. Christ uses this very formula to reject classical poetry. Greek poets

loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own
In fable, hymn and song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous.....
.....their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight (IV/339-45)

"Sion's songs" divinely inspired, praise God and "godlike men"; neither does classical oratory compare with the teachings of the prophets for the latter were "divinely taught".

Yet aspects of the speech do seem to be in conflict with others, and I think we should take them into account rather than explain them away. Whatever Satan offers, philosophy, poetry or oratory, is rejected for what God and his prophets teach, and what is important to note is the tone of the rejection. The way Christ rejects classical philosophy and poetry leaves very little room for arguing that Milton merely wished to indicate the superiority of Biblical learning to the classical. The terms of the rejection are harsh and unyielding; but even after talking of Greek poetry as being "thin sown with aught of profit or delight" Christ goes on to make a vital distinction. Some pagan poetry is not "unworthy" if in it

moral virtue is expressed
By light of nature not in all quite lost. (IV/351-2)

In *Christian Doctrine* Milton indeed admits that wisdom is not confined to Christians alone: "it cannot be denied that some traces of

the divine image still remain in us ... not wholly extinguished by this spiritual death. This is quite clear ... from the holiness and wisdom in both word and deed of many of the heathens ..." (*Yale*, 6, 1. 12 p. 396). In *Paradise Regained* this admission seems to modify what has just been said ; it pulls one, in fact, in a different direction, giving a glimpse almost of a different sensibility. In *Of Education* Milton had thought that in order to instruct young minds "more amply in the knowledge of vertue and the hatred of vice" the "moral works" of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius "and those Locrian remnants" were to be recommended ; but the students should "close the dayes work, under the determinat sentence of David, or Salomon, or the Evangels and Apostolic scriptures" (*Yale*, 2, 396-7). This clear idea of hierarchy is obscured in *Paradise Regained*, in which classical learning seems to be criticised in entirety, but Milton also seems unable to disregard the claims of pagan authors to teach moral virtue. Though Milton never wavers in his belief in the *supremacy* of Scripture, there are nevertheless complicating factors, and a recognition of this fact is important in understanding the nature of this difficult speech.

It is significant to note, in this context, that in showing the insubstantiality of truth in pagan philosophy, Christ uses a classical myth. He who

seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. (IV/318-21)

The allusion to the myth of Ixion, who was tricked by Jupiter into lying with a cloud when he tried to seduce Juno, is clear. MacKellar feels that the use of this myth is "ironic" ;¹⁸ the irony, however, seems to direct itself at those who seek knowledge through these specious means, and there is no indication that the myth itself is not meant to be taken seriously. Fulgentius interpreting this myth thought that it meant that "he who seeks for more than he should will be less than he now is" and saw in it a political allegory ; Ixion represented worth, and Juno dominion ; "...dominion is to last forever, but fleeting temporal power is envious of this and hastily seizing wings, giving the illusion of momentary achievement rather than the truth of it, takes on an empty look like the quality of

the wind."¹⁰ It is in Milton's use of myth, not only here but also later in the poem, that we have the clearest indication of contradictory impulses in the poem.

That is not to say, however, that the rejection from Milton's point of view is not deeply felt. Even in *Of Education* in which Milton had outlined a formidable programme of classical studies, he firmly holds that the end of learning is ultimately a religious one, "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright (*Yale*, 2, pp. 366-7). Elsewhere in his prose writings Milton shows his contempt of learning that obscures this religious end, and his preference for the "plaine unlearned man that lives well by that light which he has" (*Animadversions*, *Yale*, 1. p. 720). For Milton the poet, as well, inspiration came not from classical literature, but "that eternall Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge" (*The Reason of Church Government*, II, *Yale*, 1, 820-1). Even the extreme position of *Paradise Regained*, as many critics have shown, is actually quite conventional. Christopher Hill relates Milton's attitude to those of many radical thinkers in the 17th century, especially to the widespread belief that university learning was unnecessary to the church, in opposition to those who held that human learning was essential for preachers, that only those who had undergone university training in the classics might preach.¹⁰ "They seemed to deny by implication the fundamental protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, to restrict its application to educated clerics."¹¹ That merely human learning was inessential and indeed unnecessary was held by many of the radicals. "Human learning hath its place among human things", declared William Dell. But it 'hath no place in Christ's kingdom'.¹²

The rejection of classical learning in *Paradise Regained* has another significance too. It is difficult not to see in it Milton's reaction to Renaissance humanism, with its looking for models and inspiration in the classical past. It is true, of course, that in England classical learning was regarded from the beginning largely as a means rather than an end; for Sidney, no less than Milton, the end of learning is to repair the fall of Adam:

This purifying of wit...which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth, or to what immediate end soever it be directed,

the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of.¹¹

Douglas Bush acutely observes that Milton's dilemma is that of a puritan bred in the tradition of Renaissance classicism.¹² Like Protestant humanists before him, Milton had also believed in the value of the teachings of antiquity, second only to Scripture, a belief that he does not entirely relinquish even in *Paradise Regained*. However, faced with Satan's offer, Milton's Christ must make the necessary choice. Faith ultimately is much more important than all the wealth of classical learning. In *Paradise Lost* as in *Paradise Regained*, it is the instruction of the Holy Spirit that supports the poet's "adventurous song", soaring above the Aonian mount, not the imitation of an antique past.

Augustine too had faced a problem not entirely alien to that of Milton. For one thing, the treatise concerning the City of God against the pagans was aimed, David Knowles tells us, at combating a paganism that essentially looked to the past for enlightenment and inspiration. Rome in Augustine's day was still largely pagan, especially in the highest social levels. "A renaissance of classical literature", says Knowles, "had strengthened their sentiment; still more, they had been confirmed in their opposition to Christianity by the Neo-Platonic philosophy"¹³ with its spiritual and mystical doctrines. Peter Brown perceptively analyses Augustine's attempt to "reach the last pagans through their libraries"; their antiquarian zeal led them to search in religion and philosophy alike for whatever could boast a *litterata vetustas* :

It is just this *vetustas* which Augustine dissects. He intercepts the pagans in their last retreat to the past : he will expose the tainted origins of the cults that were most ancient, and that figured most in the classics ; he will play upon the inconsistencies, and hint at the secret incredulity of the writers who preserved this past...¹⁴

Yet Augustine, like Milton, was himself deeply imbued in classical learning : a rhetorician by training, a man whose knowledge of Plotinus was profound. Yet by the time he wrote the *City of God* he had come to believe firmly that Christians also had a literature of inexhaustible richness. "Your Virgil is now deliberately juxtaposed at every turn, with Our Scriptures."¹⁵ Augustine, however, shows his

deep sensitivity to the attractiveness of pagan philosophy, especially Platonism. It is seen as a more serious challenge than any other school of philosophy, and consequently the rejection of Platonism occupies much of Augustine's time in the *City of God*.

Frank Kermode, discussing Milton's distinction between "useful" and "useless" learning, and his identification of useful knowledge with that taught by the Scriptures, thought that throughout the passage (IV/321-6), Augustine's dismissal of the dissensions of Gentile philosophers in favour of the sweet concord of the canonical scriptures in Bk 18, Chapter 41 of the *City of God*, was not far from the poet's mind.²⁸ On a closer look, the similarities between the entirety of Christ's rejection of classical philosophy and poetry and Augustine's treatment of these subjects seem significant and meaningful, and are not confined to this chapter only, but to an attitude which finds expression at various points in the *City of God*. Satan's offer of pagan learning illuminated by "nature's light"

The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light; (IV/227-8)

and Christ's rejection of this in favour of that which is illuminated by divine light, bears resemblance to Augustine's treatment of "natural philosophy". For him, natural philosophy, as expounded by philosophers rather than common men, is the most serious challenge to Christianity, and therefore must be answered carefully and elaborately. In Bk 8 Augustine presents his elaborate critique of Platonism, which he considers the height of natural philosophy and theology. Socrates, Plato and the Platonists with their commitment to morality and their identification of "God, the supreme and true God as the author of all created things, the light of knowledge, the Final Good of all activity" and their recognition of God as the origin of existence, the truth of doctrine and the blessedness of life" are admitted to be the philosophers whose teachings most closely approximate Christianity (8/9). Yet Augustine, profoundly influenced by this philosophy at one time, has to reject them and indeed all philosophy that is not inspired by Christianity, and this well might have been Milton's text

we ... place our reliance on the inspired history belonging to our religion and consequently have no hesitation in treating as utterly false

anything which fails to conform to it, no matter what may be the position of the other works of secular literature which, whether true or false, offer nothing of value to help us to a life of righteousness and felicity. (18/40)

Milton, I feel, is committed to this ideal, but is also strongly aware of contradictory impulses, which to some extent modify this rejection.

Augustine finds powerful support for his argument in the contradictions between the various schools of classical philosophy. He concisely summarises the different schools, and their manifest irreconcilability. Some philosophers, says Augustine, held that there was one world, others that there were many; some contended that it would continue for ever, others that it is bound to perish, and so on. Against that he places the prophets "who were in accord with each other and showed no kind of dissent" (18/41). Augustine also deals specifically with many of the different schools, especially in Bk 8. His view of Socrates is quite close to that of Milton: he, "the master of all the famous thinkers of the time" (18/37), exposed the ignorance of others regarding ethical questions, an activity to which he devoted his entire mental effort, all the time confessing his own ignorance (8/3).

Augustine also shows his concern with Stoic philosophy. In 14/2 he dismisses the Epicureans as living by "the rule of the flesh", and goes on to discuss, later in the book, the Stoic ideas of constancy and apathy. Augustine does not deny that even the most virtuous of Christians is subject to emotions; he fears punishment and desires to eternal life; he fears to sin and desires to persevere. Even Christ expressed emotions when he thought proper: "human emotion was not illusory in him who had a truly human body and a truly human mind" (14/9). On the other hand, the desire to achieve 'apathy' like the Stoics leads to "hardness" and "insensibility", a deadening of one's human self. In their striving to be unswayed by emotion and uninfluenced by feeling, they "lose every shred of their humanity", and do not achieve true tranquillity (*loc. cit.*). As for Milton, for Augustine too, this desire to negate their human self, and the "contempt for true Godhead" merely indicates supreme arrogance and ignorance (*loc. cit.*) Augustine's rejection of fate and destiny for divine foreknowledge (5/9) is also relevant to what Christ says.

MacKellar, commenting on Christ's statement that "Greece from us these arts derived" (IV/338), observes that in defending Christianity from surrounding paganism, "some of the early Church Fathers maintained that the Greeks had derived their law, philosophy and poetry from the Jews, who had enjoyed the advantage of greater antiquity and divine inspiration".²⁰ Augustine consistently advances statements of this belief. In discussing Plato's philosophy, Augustine suggests that since Plato's conception of God closely resembles that of the Jews, he probably learnt it from his acquaintance with prophetic works, especially of Jeremiah, whom he might have even heard during the course of his visit to Egypt (8/11). Elsewhere Augustine argues that the prophetic authority antedates the beginning of pagan philosophy, and the latter was inspired by the writing of the prophets, which had already come to the knowledge of nearly all nations (18/37). Even the "great theological poets" Orpheus, Linus and Musaeus wrote after the time of Moses (loc. cit.). Earlier in this book, he also seems to express the belief that these poets have "ill imitated"; even though they might have had something to say about the true God, they were prone to telling "frivolous lies" and could not refrain from ... legends which bring shame on their deities" (18/14). But he is also convinced that the profanities of pagan literature reflect "the vice of their deities" (P. R. IV/340). That the poets can depict the gods as performing immoral and evil deeds, Augustine, no less than Milton, believed, is a sign of their own depravity and malice: "their gods allowed and enjoyed the lampooning on the public stage ... of gods themselves", whether fact or fiction (2/9). If the poets falsely represented Zeus as an adulterer, then the gods should have shown their anger at these stage shows, not demanded them (2/8). In fact, Augustine sees in these shows the Devil's malice; representations of the vices of the gods are intended to make men follow them, so that they are ensnared and corrupted (2/10). Augustine praises Plato for excluding dramatic shows from his ideal republic, and considers him superior to the pagan gods (2/14).

Augustine's criticism of classical literature and philosophy, however categorical, does at one or two points in his huge treatise seem counteracted by certain qualifications. One might point to his evident admiration for Plato (e.g. 8/4) and his belief that if Plato

and Porphyry could be combined, they would not be far from what he saw as the truth (22/27). Augustine also seems to have held some pagan literature in regard. He describes comedies and tragedies as being " more acceptable" and felt them to be free from verbal obscenities. He says, not without gentle irony, but not dismissing them either, "the older generation compel the young to read and learn them as part of what is called 'a liberal education for gentlemen'," (2/8). The most remarkable statement of Augustine's willingness to admire pagan literature and philosophy comes towards the end of the *City of God*. In 22/24 Augustine turns to celebrate the beauty and plenitude of creation and man's natural power, with an enthusiasm which we are apt to miss in the predominant ascetic tone of the work. He lauds in an almost Renaissance fashion "the natural abilities of the human mind, the chief ornament of this mortal life" which are manifest in all man's achievements. The list includes painting and sculpture, "marvels in theatrical spectacles ... the enjoyment afforded to the mind by the trappings of eloquence and the rich diversity of poetry", music; man's knowledge of the sciences and the natural world, and the "brilliant wit...[of] philosophers...". Augustine reminds us that he is talking not of the attributes of the way of faith, but of man's natural genius, but that does little to weaken the power of this passage. It must be admitted that these qualifications go only a little way in counteracting the vehemence and finality of Augustine's rejection, but they do exist and it is important that we take note them.

III

I have tried to show that the rejection of classical learning in *Paradise Regained* resembles, at many points, Augustine's arguments against the pagans: Milton would have found in Augustine confirmation of the belief that pagan philosophy and learning are ultimately useless to the right life, because the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for a man to know. On the other hand, Milton seems to be impelled in a different direction, and grants that some of pagan learning at least does inculcate moral virtue. Ultimately, critics have told us, the rejection of the classical world is relative

rather than absolute : if Milton, "a warfaring Christian, must choose between the classical light of nature and the Hebrew light of revelation, he cannot hesitate, whatever the cost".³⁰ Even in *Christian Doctrine*, a result of investigations, "drawn from the sacred Scriptures alone" (*Yale*, 6, p. 125) Milton quotes approvingly from Euripedes (*Yale*, 6, l. 13, pp. 407-8). It is in this context that I would like to consider two of the very rare uses of myth and epic simile in *Paradise Regained*. At the climactic point of the poem, Christ's defeat of Satan on the pinnacle, the classical world returns, and this, I feel, has important bearing on our understanding of the full complexity of the poem's attitude to the classics.

Christ stands in the storm "unshaken", and the confrontation, as Kermode observes, moves suddenly to the plane of violent action,³¹ the demand that Christ show his power most insistent. "I ... have found thee", Satan says to Christ

firm
To the utmost of mere man, both wise and good,
Not more ; (IV/534-6)

On the pinnacle, Satan is sure, Christ will be forced to show his identity, in what sense he is the Son of God. If "mere man", he will fall and die ; if something more, the angels will save him. What follows reminds us of what Lancelot Andrewes, following Augustine, thought Christ set as an example for man ; to answer the wiles of the tempter by countering distrust with faith.³² Christ stands, Satan falls, and the poem moves into a double simile that comments on the nature of the action.

... Satan smitten with amazement fell
As when Earth's son Antaeus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foiled still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air, expired and fell ;
So after many a foil the tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.
And as that Theban monster that proposed
Her riddle, and him, who solved it not devoured ;

That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,
... So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend, (IV/562-76)

Augustine in the *City of God* had linked together these myths (18/13), but there they are examples of the fantastic fables that the Greeks devised. Milton uses them as a commentary on the most significant action of the poem. Editors usually point to the fact that Hercules was in the Renaissance widely thought to be a type of Christ, and his victory over Antaeus an allegory of the victory of the spirit (or prudence, or reason) over the flesh and appetites.⁵⁵ It is also interesting to note that in the *Table of Cebes*, which Milton in *Of Education* had recommended as an "easy and delightful book of education" (Yale, 2, pp. 383-4), the Sphinx is represented as an allegory of ignorance... "Ignorance is like a Sphynx unto man ... but ... if one apprehend it with a true conceit, Ignorance breaketh his owne necke, and the whole course of his life that understandeth it aright, shall be replenished with perfect beatitude".⁵⁶ Though Douglas Bush is right in thinking that there is no hint of allegory in Milton's use of these myths,⁵⁵ he would have been fully aware of their allegorical interpretations. The richness of the comparison seems striking. Both Hercules and Oedipus accomplish their victories not merely through strength, but also through the application of reason or intelligence (Hercules, not being able to defeat Antaeus, at length throttles him in the air). "Christ, the divine word, destroys the monster whose riddles threaten all human life";⁵⁶ the answer to the Sphinx's riddle is "man", and Satan is defeated by the perfect man, who conquers through his perfect faith in the word of God.

Even more than the myth of Ixion, those of Hercules and Oedipus show the pressures that the rejection of the classical world is subject to in *Paradise Regained*. One might conceivably say that the classical world that Christ had apparently exorcised, returns in this passage. Kingsley Widmer, however, has argued that the Hercules-Antaeus myth is ironically meant, that the comparison of Christ with Hercules is made in order to emphasise disproportion. Milton of course clearly indicates disproportion: "to compare / Small things with greatest". Widmer, too, cannot reconcile the use of this myth with the rejection of the classical world that Christ makes.⁵⁷ But the detection of "irony" is difficult to substantiate. These

victories are surely enough "small things", but the greatest victory of them all, subsumes them, as the perfect hero subsumes the virtue of all heroic types and exceeds them by far. MacKellar, who quotes Widmer's opinion, does not find any disproportion in the use of the myth of Oedipus, but rather comments on its aptness.³⁸ Even if from some theoretical or dogmatic viewpoint one could say that these myths are entirely disproportionate, the imaginative effect does seem to be one of reinforcement. As with his superbly evocative uses of classical myth in *Paradise Lost*, at this climactic point of *Paradise Regained*, Milton turns to the classical world.

"Small things with greatest" reflects back on the rejection of classical learning too. Learning, as Christopher Hill tells us, was one of the temptations that Milton had known: "the man whom his radical admirers had called 'the learned Mr Milton' must have been more tempted to make an idol of learning than of anything else."³⁹ Satan offers a critical choice: learning is offered as an adjunct to power, to fame, to kingship. In reply Christ emphasizes faith rather than knowledge. All men can have faith; and what knowledge is required to strengthen faith is accessible through Scriptural teaching. In *Paradise Regained* Milton makes his moral choice. Hill observes that the rejection of learning might have been Milton's reaction to the soubriquet of "learned": he wanted to be exemplary through his faith rather than his learning.⁴⁰ The rejection of classical philosophy as being false and insubstantial, and classical poetry as illustrating a deceiving cosmetic art, indicates the extent of the sacrifice that Milton has to make. He would have found support in Augustine. Yet even Augustine at points seemed ready to make concessions; and for Milton even more, the various tensions in the poem, the heroism of Socrates, the exemplary pagans, the mythical parallels form a context against which the rejection must be seen. It is relative rather than absolute, a rejection ultimately of the terms that Satan offers. In the end, the proportion of the value of human learning to the path of Christian virtue is not more than of "small things to greatest", but it has its place. Earlier, Christ refuses to perform miracles at Satan's instigation, but does not reject miracle-working powers; he rejects Satan's offer of a kingdom and David's throne, but asserts that he will at some point in time assume them. It is important to understand the rejection of classical learning, too, in contingent terms.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(This essay incorporates substantially Chapter III of *Paradise Regained and the City of God*, M. Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1982.)

(A) *Editions and Abbreviations*

All quotations from and references to Augustine's *City of God* refer to the translation in the Pelican Classics series, translated by Henry Bettenson and edited by David Knowles (Harmondsworth 1972, repr. 1980). Chapter and page numbers have been cited ; occasionally, for clarity, the abbreviation C. G. has been used.

The edition of *Paradise Regained* used throughout is that by John Carey in *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. J. Carey and A. Fowler (London and Harlow, 1968). All references to Milton's prose are to the *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe and others, Yale University Press (New Haven and London, 1953) abbreviated as *Yale*, followed by volume and page number.

I have referred at various points to John Carey's introductions and notes to *Paradise Regained* ; the abbreviation *Carey* has been used, followed by page number in the edition cited ; and to Walter MacKellar's commentary on *Paradise Regained* in *A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton*, vol. 4, (London, 1975 ; abbreviated as *MacKellar*, followed by page number).

Standard abbreviations have been used for Milton's works as also for journals and periodicals.

(B) *Notes*

1. P. A. Flore : *Milton and Augustine* (University Park and London, 1981)
2. C. S. Lewis : *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford, repr: 1967)
3. L. Martz : *The Paradise Within* (New Haven and London, 1964)
4. I. Samuel : *Plato and Milton* (New York, 1965)
5. See, for instance, F. Kermode : "Milton's Hero", *R.E.S.*, n.s., no. 4, 1953, pp. 327-8 ; S. Kliger : "The Urbs Aeterna in *Paradise Regained*", *P.M.L.A.*, 61, 1946, pp. 485-90.
6. I. Samuel : "Milton on Learning and Wisdom", *P.M.L.A.* 64, 1949, pp. 708-23.
7. Milton and Augustine are in the main looking at different periods in the history of "Assyria", by which name ancient historians referred to the whole country between the Armenian and Iranian mountains and the Syro-Arabian desert, Cf. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, (Oxford, repr. 1978), p. 133.

8. MacKellar, p. 208.
9. see, for example, G.F. Sensabaugh, "Milton on Learning" S.P., 43, 1946, pp. 258-272.
10. Samuel, pp. 715-23.
11. Samuel, p. 717.
12. Carey, pp. 1149-50.
13. Socrates, significantly, is memorable "By what he taught" III/97.
14. MacKellar, p. 211 ; see for instance, *A Defence of Poetry*, (*Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. K. Duncan-Jones and J. van Dorsten, Oxford, 1973), p. 75.
15. Milton's distrust of Stoic doctrines is reflected in his attributing to Satan and the devils "Stoic" qualities ; e. g. their preoccupation with "fate" (e. g. P.L. I/116-7, II/559-61 ; the claim of of self-sufficiency is also relevant to the portrayal of Satan.
16. MacKellar, p. 219.
17. The Renaissance conflation of Aristotle and Horace is discussed by Marvin Herrick, *The Fusion of Horatian and Aristotelian Literary Criticism, 1531-1555*, (Urbana, 1946)
18. MacKellar, pp. 216-7.
19. Fulgentius : *Mythologies* 2 : 14 ; translated in *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, trans. and ed. L. G. Whitbread (Ohio, 1979) p. 79.
20. C. Hill : *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth, repr. 1980) ; *Milton and the English Revolution* (London repr, 1979), p. 423-4.
21. Hill : *World Turned Upside Down*, p. 302.
22. Hill : *Milton*, p. 426.
23. Sidney : *Defence, Misc. Prose*, p. 82.
24. D. Bush : *The Renaissance and English Humanism* (Toronto, repr. 1972), p. 126.
25. D. Knowles, introd. to *Pelican City of God*, p. xv.
26. Peter Brown : *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967) p. 305.
27. Brown, p. 306
28. Kermode : "Milton's Hero" p. 328 and n.
29. MacKellar, p. 218.
30. Bush, p. 125.
31. Kermode p. 329.
32. Lancelot Andrewes : *Ninety Six Sermons*, vol. 5 (Oxford 1843) p. 503.
33. Carey, p. 1164 ; J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 110, 223

34. *Epictetus Manuall, Cebes Table, Theophrastus Characters*, tr. J. Healey (London , 1616) pp. 110-1.
35. D. Bush: *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (New York, 1957), p. 270 n.
36. M. Y. Hughes, ed. John Milton: *Complete Poems and Major Prose* (New York, 1957, p. 477 ; quoted MacKellar, p. 243.
37. "The Iconography of Renunciation: The Miltonic Simile", *J.E.L.H.*, 25, 1958, pp. 258-9.
38. MacKellar, p. 243.
39. Hill, *Milton*, p. 423.
40. Hill, *Milton*, p. 426.

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